

CHRISTIAN MANNERS

I Corinthians 15:20-34 reads, “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, which advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink: for tomorrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.”

I want to look specifically at the passage, “Evil communications corrupt good manners” and consider the matter of

Christian manners. The Bible is full of very practical, and necessary teaching on this subject. We need to understand that man's standards and manners change and adjust over time, and from place to place, but God's standards and manners last forever. They work, are proper, and are worthy of being taught. I know some details adjust from place to place and there are some humorous situations regarding manners from one place to another. For instance, we teach people in our country that you do not burp at the table. In some countries you are expected to burp at the end of the meal to show appreciation for how good it was. That does not mean that you should practice that everywhere.

There are some places where you never wear shoes in the house. I have been such places where I knew when I arrived at the door I took my shoes off and walked in my socks. If they could afford it, they would have a whole row of house slippers and you were to pick up a pair that fit you to wear while you were visiting in the house. This was in appreciation for the lady of the house. You didn't track in mud, dust, dirt, and sand where she had cleaned. If you walked in with your dirty shoes you were adding to her workload.

You have to realize that in some places you must make adjustments. In some countries if a man smiles at a lady he has confessed an affair or has admitted a desire for such. If a woman smiles at a man, it is an encouragement. It becomes a very difficult thing when you visit a country like that, for you must control your face.

I know a little bit about the problems that arise in other countries. The

Lord has been gracious, and I have made a number of visits out of the country. I have been able to see that these things work and that they apply. Any failings I may have had were when I had failed Biblically on some principle, or it was just a surface matter of ignorance. Many of the Christians from America have caused great damage in other countries thinking that really, as long as they meant right, it was okay. They did not understand that some evil communications had corrupted their good manners and hindered what they could accomplish for the good of God in that country, and really, in this country. I know of people who have been so offended by bad-mannered professing Christians that they are difficult to reach and tell about how wonderful Jesus is. They figure that Jesus makes people rude and crude.

We are going to deal with some principles from the Word of God that will help you to make these adjustments rather than say, "Well, where I grew up this is how we always did it." What does the Word of God say on the whole matter of manners and how to handle some of these things?

In this passage we find that evil communications corrupt good manners. This is written to a church in Corinth to tell them that the good manners they had could be corrupted by evil communications. It is not saying, "You have bad manners and need to learn good manners." Rather, as believers, you have good manners and evil communications will corrupt what you have. When God saves us, He does a work of grace in our hearts and makes us gracious. There are

manners that show up in the converted soul. I will not say that it is a perfect work, for none of us are a perfect product, but there is a great change that occurs. The Scriptures indicate that evil communications corrupt what is the normal thing for a believer. Good manners ought to be the normal and common thing among believers, rather than being the unusual or the exception.

Evil communications are a guarantee to have your manners corrupted. You need to be careful what you expose yourself to, because eventually it will show up in your life. I can tell that some people have been in bad situations and exposed themselves to some doubtful things because their manners have been affected, infected, or corrupted. I know what causes that. According to the Bible, there have been some evil communications that caused this to come about. "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

The flesh can corrupt your manners. The devil and his program will try to corrupt your manners. The world, with all it has to offer, certainly is going to try to corrupt the manners of believers. Evil communications come from the world. Satan is the god of this world, and our fleshly nature is drawn to the world. We have a three-fold cord working on us to try to destroy the manners God implanted in us when He saved us. We need to understand that there is a struggle to maintain what God gave us. The evil communications are constantly trying to corrupt those good manners.

Let us look more specifically at Ephesians 4:29, "Let not corrupt communication proceed out of your

mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” Be careful what you say. After you have been exposed to such things, do not allow them to just roll out because that will corrupt the manners you have. When you ought to be ministering grace to your hearers, you are going to be corrupting your good manners with that corrupt communication flowing out.

The roots that cause this communication and the corruption of it are given in the next verse. The word “and” is there in verse 30 telling us that this goes right along with that matter of corrupt communication that will destroy your good manners. Verse 30 reads, “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness...” Bitterness will ruin communication. It will ruin your manners. Have you ever tried to be gracious to someone with whom you are bitter? That is hard on your manners. It is not a natural, good flow of manners.

The verse continues, “...and wrath...”. How are your manners when you go ballistic? Do you have good manners then? They get corrupted, do they not? “And anger, and clamor...”. All of that noise and confusion and strife and stress will affect your manners. “And evil speaking...” If you listen to those who do not speak the truth, those who tell filthy stories, use bad language, or listen to poor quality music, that will destroy your manners. That is evil speaking and is part of that corrupt communication. These are to “be put away from you, with all malice.” Do not hold hard feelings toward people. That will work on your manners.

Instead of that, verse 32 tells us we are to, “Be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” This is the cure for our manners. When you start downhill you have an explanation for what might have started the problem and a cure on how to deal with it.

I am going to list some things from the Bible to help open up your thinking on this subject of manners. For example, there is the so-called Golden Rule. That deals with the subject of manners and how we treat others. Our relationship with believers is another area of manners. The matter of “honor the King”, respect in the matter of government, the issue of humility, knowing how to properly witness also involves proper manners. Knowing how to live peaceably with all men, how to be gracious towards others, how to properly function on the job, how to stay honest in a wicked society, how to approach food properly when it comes time to eat, how to get along in the church, how to be truthful when lies are easy and the common thing, and how to be thankful require excellent manners. It is amazing how some people have no thankfulness. They lack in that area of manners. There is also the matter of children obeying parents, and the honoring of parents, showing kindness, knowing how to deny ourselves, learning to love our neighbor and show compassion, learning to submit to one another, to be merciful, to have no guile, no envy, no greed, not to be bitter, and not to hold malice.

When we got saved, the Lord revealed the Holy Spirit through us. He is the Spirit of Grace. That is one of His

titles. That shows up in manners. Some people act like they do not know the Spirit of Grace because there is nothing gracious about them. They might talk about grace, but they do not show any grace. That is a very frightening thing. “Evil communications corrupt good manners.”

The Lord Jesus is the Utmost Gentleman. We are to show the life of Jesus to the world. This will show up in manners. It must show up there. The Bible says, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (I Corinthians 5:17)

We are to show that God did an act of creation in making us a new creature, and manners will be one of the ways that shows. There was a poem of which I only remember the first lines: “I’d rather see a sermon than hear one any day....” Some people’s lives contradict their message. I have watched men preach on “The Love of God,” but if you had a video and turned the sound off, you would have thought they were preaching against sin and how to fight the devil. If they would have been speaking a different language and you just listened to the tone of their voice, you would have never thought that they were talking about the mercies of God. The whole message was totally out of kilter. When we tell people how God is a gracious God who saves sinners and we act ill-mannered, we are contradicting our message. “Evil communication corrupt good manners.” We need to reveal the Lord in the matter of our manners.

The Bible makes an issue concerning God having manners for His people that are different from the manners

of the world. That does not mean that we do not know their particular manners for eating, greeting people, and that sort of thing. We are to have a set of core values that control our manners that are different than, “This is what you put on and act out to get along in society.” We are not to act mannerly, that is hypocritical. We are to *be* mannerly because it is part of our nature.

Let us consider some Scriptures where God makes an issue of the manners of His people and the manners of the world. He tells us what He felt about their manners when His people got in trouble and were in sin. The subject comes up early in the Bible, in Leviticus 20, and God uses this terminology of manners. It is a frightful thing if a lost person’s manners are better than a Christian’s manners. Such a thing should never happen.

Leviticus 20:23 tells us, “And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.” God said, “When you are given the land and move in, don’t pick up their manners. You are to have a different set of manners than they have. They disgusted me. They sickened me with their manners and I don’t want you to have their manners.”

You may say, “My manners are the same as the world.” That is sad. Here is how God felt about the manners of a whole nation. God said, “You are my people, and I have manners for my people.” God’s manners are higher manners than the world’s manners. The details can be sorted through, but we need to understand

that sinners have manners that God abhors. Do not copy those manners. You do not want to fit in with that crowd or you will find God acting towards you as He acts towards them.

II Kings 17:34 reads, “Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the Lord.” Their manners are not based on fearing the Lord. They may be based on fearing people or fearing poverty, but not the fear of the Lord.

“Neither do they after their statutes.” God says, “I gave them statutes to follow but their manners lead them in other directions.” “Nor after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel.” God had manners for His people, but they had gone after former manners which were different from those that were governed by the teachings of the Word of God. They had gone into compromise and apostasy and their manners showed it because they were not based on Bible teaching.

It becomes sobering when people do not even know what the Bible teaches on manners. They are not interested in the details of God’s teaching. They say, “Just tell me how to get to Heaven and I will live like I please.” Does God not make a person a new creature? Is He not going to make some changes?

Those that are exposed to evil communications may think that their manners are fine, for they fit in well with the world around them. Evil has corrupted the good manners and now they just have the world’s manners.

Ezekiel 11:12 reads, “And ye shall know that I am the Lord: for ye have not

walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that are round about you.” That sounds threatening at the beginning of the verse and sounds descriptive at the end of the verse. They picked up the manners of the lost, those without Christ and in disobedience to God, and the Lord is about to show how mighty He is in dealing with them.

I am trying to show that there is a distinction in this matter of manners. Just having any set of manners is not adequate in the light of the Word of God. We need to see where we are, as Christians and so-called “Bible believers” in America. Manners have ceased to be important in how we handle the work of God, the Word of God, and the reputation of God in our daily living.

Acts 13:18 says, “And about the time of forty years suffered He their manners in the wilderness.” Paul is talking about the children of Israel after they left Egypt. You may want to read Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy to study the manners of God’s people in the wilderness journey, and to see the manners that God said He had to suffer, but never did like. It would be an awful thing if God was saying, “I am having to suffer the manners of my people in the churches of America.”

Moses looked out of step because he was so meek and mannerly. The one time when he broke over on that was enough to keep him from being allowed to go across Jordan. He copied their manners and let them goad him into smiting the rock the second time. That is how many people do when they are pushed—they just strike

back. That was common with how they had been behaving. Their behavior and their set of manners were not approved of by God even though they were His people. They practiced those manners year after year for a lifetime, until all those that had voted at Kadesh-Barnea had died. God suffered their manners in the wilderness. That is sobering when you think about it.

Let us consider a few things the Bible says which would give us insight into the manners of those whom the Bible says are lost. If there is something here that we have picked up, maybe we have some repenting to do. In Titus chapter 1 we find God's terms for lost people and they certainly reflect this matter of manners. Titus 1:12-13 reads, "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, 'The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.' This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;". These things that are the natural, normal things of their culture, that they grew up with, are not to be tolerated among Christians. They are to be rebuked when they retreat to the ill manners of their culture. The verse says, "...liars, evil beasts..." I know some professing Christians that these terms would come close to describing. They are animal-like in the way they respond and act--like a bull in a china shop. They are like a junkyard dog. Do not turn your back or they might bite you. These are descriptions that are not to be tolerated among saints. This is what the lost say about themselves. They are slow bellies. That will also speak to the issue of manners.

Romans 3:12 begins to describe lost

people who have gone out of the way and become unprofitable. "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." The lost man in his natural state is described in verse 13, "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:" They can set people on fire with their tongue. The passage continues in verses 14-18, "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes." They are ill-mannered. These are marks of the natural lost man left to himself without a work of God. God does not save people to behave like that. He does a work of grace and changes them.

In II Peter 2 we have a passage about apostasy--those who claim to be saved but are lost. They have turned their back on the truth and consequently they are in error. They are religious but not right. They have a "form of godliness but denying the power thereof:" according to II Timothy 3. Here in II Peter 2:12 we read, "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;". One of the results of the teaching of evolution is that some people have stretched their minds, laid aside the facts, and have believed this false teaching. Then they started acting like what they thought they descended from.

There are people in Christian circles who are just as beast-like. I have heard terms like this, "When the lion is at home he ought to roar." They think that justifies

hollering in the home, but that is the behavior of beasts. They may think, “I am bigger, stronger and louder. I can out-shout her and care for things in this way.” I have thought, “Do you realize what you are saying, in the light of the Word of God?”

Some pastors could tell you of people who are mannerly when there are difficulties in the church and others who are like brute beasts, just running wild. They speak about things they do not even understand. That is not good manners. Have you ever been in a conversation and you know what you are talking about, but someone walks up and says, “I have something to add to this.” When you listen, you realize they do not have a clue what is going on. They have no understanding. They would have done better to have stayed quiet. A fool is known by his multitude of words, according to the book of Proverbs. That is, at best, ill-mannered.

Verse 14 continues describing apostasy, “Having eyes full of adultery...”. They may not physically practice it, but their eyes are sure playing the game. How embarrassing, un-virtuous, and ill-mannered for people to be looking at others in that way. That is not for Christians, but it does go on in this apostasy. The verse continues, “...and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices;”. They justify their covetousness because it is in their heart. Verse 14-16 continues, “... cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who

loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet." The man was so stubborn and determined to get the money that God had a donkey talk to him. The donkey had better manners than he did. It is one thing to behave as a brute, but when you get below the donkey you are in trouble!

Some people will act most any way for money, because their heart is full of covetousness. Their practices are so common that they are no longer grieved or disturbed by them. They just act care not who they take advantage of. Their good manners, if they ever had them, were destroyed. This is what lost people are like. Saved people should not bear any resemblance to this.

If you know your Bible, you will know that Jude is a commentary on II Peter 2. They comment back and forth, explaining each other and opening each other up so that they can be better understood. Jude verse 8 says, "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion..." They may say, "No one is going to tell me what I have to do!" That is not submission or humility, but terrible manners. The verse continues, "... and speak evil of dignities." They are always tearing down those that are in a place of authority and responsibility. Verse 10 continues, "But these speak evil of those things which they know not:". They can condemn things without really understanding what they are condemning. Verse 10 further reads, "...but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." What

they do know, they respond like animals.
What they do not know they just criticize.

Verse 16 tells us, “These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words,”. They have mastered terminology, tone, the way to put clichés together and sound wonderful, but their manners show who they really are. It is not what they say, it is what they *are* that counts and God is exposing the difference. They have men’s persons in admiration because of advantage. They speak up to some people because they can get something from them. Others they lord it over, putting them down because there is nothing they can do for them. That is terrible manners.

I remember sitting at a table with a gracious brother of mine in England. I had my son with me and we were eating supper. He had his two children there, a son and a daughter. He was unaware that the end of his tie had fallen into his tomato soup, and then fallen onto his shirt. I do not know what he had told them before, but we were trying to eat British style. That means instead of using a fork like a shovel you turn the fork upside down and use your knife to scoop food on the back of the fork, balance it without spilling, and get it to your mouth. We were busy about our eating and tried not to think about his tie. He thought his children were laughing at our attempts to copy the British style of eating, so he rebuked them. He told them this little story from the time of Queen Victoria. Prince Albert was with the children and they had a guest from the country who was having trouble eating his peas and was trying to eat them with his

knife. He rebuked his children and said, “You shouldn’t laugh at other people’s manners. They are doing the best they can according to what they know.”

It finally came out that his children were not laughing at us and it changed the whole scene. The point is this; we do not want to ridicule or put people down. Prince Albert would not let the Prince and Princess put down someone from the country who was in no wise their equal. It used to be that royalty did not look down on the commoners.

We have a generation that is not royalty and yet look down on anyone they can. If someone comes along who might help them get a job, get a raise, or have some influence, they will play up to that person. There will be a complete personality change. They have two distinct sets of manners according to whether you can help them or not. Christians ought to have as gracious manners to those who will never be able to help them as they have to those who can. In fact, Jesus taught that we are to have those in to eat who cannot bring us back into their home to return the favor. We are to show hospitality to those who cannot return it. That is the reverse of the world.

Verse 18 reads, “How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time...”. Mocking people does not display good manners. I mocked a referee at a ball game once. I still do not agree with his calls, but I made sure that he heard my mockery and I was very pointed. Not long after that, God so dealt with me that He would not let me preach until I promised to get it right. I was six hundred miles from home, but when I got home I went

and knocked on his door. His wife or daughter came to answer the door. I said, "My name is Paul Reno and I need to talk to the man of the house." She said, "I will get him." He came and invited me in and I was able to get it right.

Whether he was right or wrong, I had no right to sit there and skin him alive from the stands. Mockery is not good manners. That is one of the marks of the last time. The world does it in sports, politics, business, schools, and in homes. We are not to be like the heathen. We have been saved and made new creatures. We have had the Spirit of Grace put within us and we are not to be mockers.

This is one of the areas where I struggle. If I get around the wrong people, those evil communications will fire up actions in mockery. Evil communications corrupt my good manners.

Verse 20 says, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." That is how we ought to be because if we do not, we will be like that in verse 19 which reads, "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." Sensuality, eyes full of adultery and, lusts of the heart are commonly accepted in American manners and standards. They have not just crept into the church, they have flowed in, to the point there is everything short of immorality that goes on there.

MANNERS IN WITNESSING

Returning to our foundation text in I Corinthians 15:33-34 we read, “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame.”

We see that many people are deceived about the issue of manners. They do not understand that their manners can be corrupted by any and all exposure to evil communications. They can be deceived about the fact that the manners they sow are the manners they are going to reap. How you treat others is how you will be treated. This is according to the law and the prophets summed up by Jesus in Matthew 7, and according to the law of the harvest in the book of Galatians.

It is interesting how God puts things together in the Scriptures. Verse 34 is not a disconnect from verse 33. Awakening to righteousness is necessary for those whose manners have slid because of evil communications. Those who have manners that are not what they should be, need to wake up to right living or righteousness. They need to stop their sinning. Bad manners is a form of sin. Many people do not realize this. They say, “That is just my way.” It is sin in God’s eyes.

The fact that some do not have the knowledge of God is sometimes the result of bad manners. It is not just that they have never heard. Some have heard, but the Gospel was given so ill-mannerly that the people still do not have a knowledge of God. They saw something different from

what they heard, and they tied into what they *saw* instead of what they *heard*. They might have heard the Gospel message, but if it was given by someone with poor manners it is possible that they still do not have a knowledge of God. We ought to be ashamed, not only of our manners, but for how it has robbed people of a knowledge of God. We need not be deceived.

We have a generation that has been taught ill-mannered witnessing, or if you want, aggressive soul-winning. This is obnoxious to people of good manners and has caused many people to do something to get rid of the so-called soul winner, but has not produced converted sinners. They have made a decision, said a prayer, done whatever they had to do, sometimes putting up a wall of protection because of the bad manners of the so-called soul winner. Sad to say, these things are taught in clinics across our country, in our churches, and are producing a generation that at best, is hypocritical. In general, they are called backsliders, but they never got anywhere spiritually to slide back from. They are still in their sin and they do not have a proper knowledge of God. We ought to be ashamed of what is going on instead of promoting it. Rather, we glory in our shame.

It is sobering when you consider the context of this passage about good manners. Not only is it in the light of the resurrection in the resurrection chapter. Not only is it in the light that saved people should have good manners and we need to maintain good manners, but there are right and wrong manners in witnessing. We are not free to choose our manners in how we deal with sinners. The Bible speaks and

illustrates rules that will work the right way in every culture, country, time, nation, and century, and we need to be aware of those.

There are some fine details, such as whether a man could speak to a woman or not. Generally, men should witness to men, and women to women, even in the open society we have in this country. When you do otherwise you sometimes have overtones that are recognized in more sensitive cultures, where ours is so hardened that we do not necessarily realize it. Some men specialize in ministering to women, and some women in ministering to men. That brings up a red flag in my mind. I am not saying that a man can never witness to a woman, but he ought to be very cautious. There are general rules of propriety in how things are to be handled.

Let us consider some examples. Sometimes it is easier to see something illustrated than it is to just read it and figure out how it applies. Let us look at the Lord Jesus Christ and how he dealt with sinners. If we did not use His name and I were to site several cases, changing enough details that you would not know it came from the Bible, you would find that His manners and procedures would be condemned by the aggressive soul-winning crowd in America. I think there is no one better to pattern ourselves after than the Lord Jesus. I do not know of anyone who better understood what it took to have a sinner turned into a saint than the Lord Jesus Himself.

Mark 10:17 begins a passage which is recorded in the Scriptures in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It is recorded three times

for emphasis. You can study the three and you can find them dealing with the rich young ruler. Notice some things in terms of how Jesus, with proper manners, dealt with a seeking sinner. We begin in Mark 10:17 reading “And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” Now, that is about as easy an opportunity for soul-winners as anything you could ask for. Running *to* the Savior *on* his knees *wanting* to be saved. You and I both know that he went away sorrowful, lost. I cannot believe the Savior made a mistake in dealing with him.

Some are making mistakes today, but it is not Jesus. It is people who use methods that would get the decision. Jesus was not after a decision. This man had already decided. He was not after a prayer. This man had already prayed. Jesus was after a convert. He was after one who would become a disciple, for it was the disciples who were first called Christians.

Here this man comes in this condition and we read in Mark 10:18, “And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.” Notice how gently He deals with this man. He is firm, but He is gentle. He does not nail him. He does not embarrass, pressure, or push him, but He lays an issue in front of him. Verse 19 continues, “Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.” What is in verse 18 deals with the first four of the commandments and then in verse 19 He begins to deal

with commandments five through nine. In verse 20 he replies, "And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth". He said in essence, "I have been good. I have done what is right. I just need eternal life." Verse 21 tells us, "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross and follow me." Notice the love and compassion of the Savior for this man.

One thing I am sure clicked with that man. He knew the 10 commandments and knew that the first half of the law of man's relationship to God had been covered by the first statement. Everything but one of man's relationship with man had been covered in the question. There was but one thing left and that was "And Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt not covet". Jesus said, "One thing" and I am sure that man was ready to say, "I have kept that too." Jesus made a practical application of "Thou shalt not covet." He struck to the root of the issue in the man's heart. He did not say, "You are claiming a whole lot, and don't you know that there is none good, no, not one? We are all sinners and you have broken those you say that you have kept. Here is one and I want you...." There was a crowd around and Jesus could have raked him over the coals. Instead notice how gently and graciously He dealt with him saying, "You know what the last one is. Here is how you can handle it and show that you are tied to your possessions more than you want to be tied to me. That is your problem."

Different people have problems in different areas. Jesus did not deal with everyone the same. He did not have one “road” He took each one down. He just gently and graciously applied the Scriptures to this man and explained it. Verse 22 tells us, “And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.” One person said that his great possessions had him. They were bound together. Jesus was willing to let this opportunity for a decision or a profession get away, rather than bring him on less than proper ground. He did not try to psychologically manipulate him. He just graciously, as a gentleman, laid it out in front of him. Though He loved him, He would let the man go lost rather than become deceived. Jesus made it so the man could understand *why* he was still lost. He spoke to the point of need and was thorough, but He was gracious in how He did it.

We have a rash of people in our country who have made professions but never were converted. Much of that can be traced back to the manners of the people who dealt with them. Sometimes it was a wrong or partial Gospel, but many times it has to do with the manner with which they were dealt. Do we have confidence in a God with whom all things are possible? Or do we believe that with man and his methods it is possible to get a sinner saved? If our manners contradict God’s working, then all we have is our ill manners. What kind of results are they going to produce? Do not be deceived, I Corinthians 15:34 states, “... some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.” Our evil communications in

religious circles have ruined good manners in witnessing. How mannerly Jesus was! You may think, “He was too gentle.” Do not find fault with Jesus, He was right. If we have a disagreement, we are wrong. Just accept the Word of God as your authority.

Let us look in the Gospel of John and consider further the manners of Jesus as he dealt with people. Remember, this story of the rich young ruler was given in each of the first three gospels for emphasis so that we would know how to deal with sinners. In John 1 we see Jesus with a few disciples of John the Baptist who had left John and were now following Jesus. In verse 38 Jesus asked this question, “... What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to be interrupted, Master,) where dwellest thou?” They were not asking how to be saved. They just wanted to know where they were going to sleep and eat.

Many times soul-winners will not ask questions, they just make statements. They never get inside the mind of the person with whom they are dealing. They are not mannerly enough to find out what that person is thinking. What is it they are wanting? When a person tells me that they want to be saved I might ask them, “Why?”. You say, “Don’t discourage them.” I am not discouraging them. They may say, “Because I think that it may make my home a bit more peaceful.” Now we have a problem on our hands. They may say, “I don’t want to go to hell.” Well I have hardly met anyone who does. They may even say, “If I get saved, maybe the mess I am in at work will go away.”

What is it that you are after? What I am saying and what you are thinking may

be on two different wavelengths. Jesus just asked, “What are you seeking? What are you after so that I will know where we can actually communicate?” Rather than, “I have a plan. Don’t stop me. I have 3 steps (or 5 steps or whatever) and I have to get through the steps. When I get to the end repeat after me and then we can talk.” It is like a salesman without manners trying to push an insurance policy saying, “Sign on the dotted line.” Some Christians have been copying from the world’s sales programs, but Jesus was mannerly. “What seekest thou?” That is a mannerly question to try to find out what the other person is thinking and caring about,

In verse 47 Jesus sees Nathanael who was not yet saved. The Bible says, “Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” You say, “That might puff him up and he will trust his own goodness.” But Jesus does not make mistakes. It does not hurt to compliment what can be complimented. That is just good manners. Instead of trying to tear someone down and build yourself up to get what do you want from them, it does not hurt to compliment them for that which is good and right. God can show them where they are wrong, and He will. You may have to touch on some of that, but it is good manners to ask what they want and comment on what is good.

Let us consider an example that you know well, that of Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3. Notice the procedure that Jesus follows beginning in verse 2, “The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these

miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” Jesus did not respond, “Well, you have it half right, but I am more than that. I want you to know how wonderful I am.” You will not get anywhere with bragging when you are witnessing. Bragging is bad manners. He just laid the flattery aside and began to graciously deal with the necessary issue at hand. That is good manners. He did not deny it or rejoice over it, he just accepted it and went ahead. Do not be led away by praise. I have had people to whom I was witnessing who would suddenly start bragging on me thinking that would get me off the subject. You must get back to the real issue.

Notice that Jesus begins to state some truth in a general sense. Follow as we begin in verse 3, “Jesus answered and said, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Verse 5 says, “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” When Jesus comes to verse 7 He starts to be specific, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” The truth generally is that people need to be born again. If we can go far enough in this, and you are interested enough in this, I will get specific enough to say that not only do people need to be born again but *you* need to be born again. He starts dealing with the truth in general to see if there is any spiritual interest and desire to follow to the personal level, that which is a bit more private and closer to the heart. That is good manners, not to just rush right in, but to approach things by laying out spiritual truths. If there is a hunger, follow

on. If there is not, then just let those truths lie there to work. Maybe at a later time you can pick up and pursue. I know this is not what is commonly taught, but it is good manners.

We have a generation in America that is very confused. At least one-third of the population in this nation think they are born-again. In our county, where I have been for several decades, we have had more professions of salvation than we have residents, and this is not a holy nation! There have not been that many saved.

We have a problem on our hands and we need to face it. How did this happen? We did not use good manners and these people do not have a knowledge of God. Some of them have become older and they are cynical and hard to reach. Evil communications corrupted good manners and brought about this delusion.

Not only did He move from general truths to specific truths, but Jesus allowed questions. Jesus made a statement in verse 3 and Nicodemus was allowed to ask a question in verse 4 to which Jesus responded. It was not, "I am the soul winner and I will do the talking. You do the listening." If anyone could have done that, it would have been Jesus. It was a statement, a question and answer, a give and take, a mannerly discussion. You ask, "Did Nicodemus get saved?" He went with Joseph of Arimathea to prepare the body of Jesus after His death. He defended Him in front of the Sanhedrin before the crucifixion. Nicodemus did make his stand. You ask, "Where did he get saved?" It is not recorded but there was evidence that he was a changed, converted man.

These things occurred, and God honors him accordingly. You may ask, “When did they get the report of the conversion?” It is not the report of the conversion that is important.

In verse 7 He begins to deal specifically with the truth and to apply it personally. In other words, “You are interested? I will give you further instruction and give you more information.” Then in verse 9 we read, “Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?” Jesus still allows questions and responds to that question in verse 10 as He explains further down to verse 16, that verse we have memorized and love so dearly. Notice all along how gently and graciously He deals with him, never compromising and never being led off track. Jesus was a total gentleman in dealing with a sinner in need of salvation. We know the passage, but we need to observe the manner with which Jesus dealt.

Let us look at a different case. Nicodemus was of the intellectual, educated class. He was a ruler of the Jews. Let us look at a person in a totally different situation in John chapter 4, the woman at the well. Here is a wicked woman, a stranger, a woman who is a member of false religion that is patterned after the real religion. Of course the Jewish people were dead set against the Samaritans and their religion.

Beginning in verse 7 we read, “There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.” He did not say to her “Are you saved?” or “Would you rather go to Heaven or Hell?”. He said “Give me to

drink.” People say, “Get to the point. You must get to the point to get the decision.” Jesus knew what He was doing, learn from Him. He said, “Give me to drink.” The woman was shocked, for Jews did not ask Samaritans for a drink. In verse 10 “Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” She said in verse 15, “... Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.” Jesus begins to deal with something that is familiar to her and He works from that point to the Gospel.

It would do us well to learn how to mannerly sow the gospel to someone who cooks, is a carpenter, or is a salesperson. Do we know how to start from where the sinner is and bring them to the gospel that they need? Do we know how to do that graciously, or do we think that one mold fits for all? Do we know how to help a little child with no background in the Scriptures, or a religious member of another religion or cult? How do we get them to Christ and act like Christ would in doing it?

Here is an example of how Jesus, a man, dealt with a woman who was less than tactful. She was rude and kept bringing up the differences in their races, religions, and prejudices that were there. She threw these things at Jesus and He gently dealt with her through all of it.

Jesus dealt with the rich young ruler one way, Nicodemus a second way, and the woman at the well a third way, and we could go on and name others. Each case He dealt differently, but He was always the

gentleman, mannerly, and of course, always right. God has a time schedule for preparing someone. There is the issue of knowing how to properly and mannerly deal with these things, and not pick our fruit green and then wonder why it rots.

Notice in chapter 5 of John, how Jesus deals with a man at the pool of Bethesda. He speaks so graciously, gently, and mannerly with him before the man is healed. In chapter 8 He deals with a woman taken in adultery. In chapter 9 He deals with a man who was born blind. In chapter 10 He explains about being the Good Shepherd of the sheep.

Notice how He deals with Judas and Peter and others from time to time. He was ever the perfect gentleman. Notice how He dealt with Paul on the road to Damascus. Remember how He dealt with you. I remember how He dealt with me and those memories should give us a clue on how to deal with others.

Evil communications corrupt good manners. Some do not have the knowledge of God, even though they might have been the recipient of witnessing. If it was with wrong manners, they might have seen a sermon and not heard what was said. I Corinthians 15:34 "... for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame." Jesus reserved strong words for the hypocrites and the self-righteous, but to the others He was tender and gentle. You need to learn to suit your message and manner to whom you address. Learn that from Jesus.

Read the gospels, until you hear the very tone and manner of the Savior. That will help you walk in His footsteps. Oh, that we would know enough of Jesus that

we would behave like He did when we deal with the eternal souls of men. We need to be able to deal with them in a suitable way.

Do you see how good manners and witnessing fit together? I am for witnessing and evangelizing and doing all we Biblically can to reach lost souls all over the world. I am willing to go blind to get the gospel out. I am willing to die to get the gospel out. I think I have fairly well proven that in the past. I am willing to sacrifice and suffer, but I will not compromise on what the Bible says is the manner that must go with our message. Many of you know the Christian message, but Christian manners ought to walk hand in hand.

SOW-REAP

In Matthew 7 we find part of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. In verse 12 we have the so-called, "Golden Rule". "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." The

summation of the Old Testament is, to think of how you would want to be treated and treat others that way. There are many people who like to take authority over others and put them down, but those same people become angry when the tables are turned. They do not understand the process of sowing and reaping.

The principle is, before harvest time, you need to decide what you want your harvest to be. Then you start sowing according to what you want to receive. If you plant tomatoes you will receive tomatoes, but you have to plant cabbage to receive cabbage. These things are obvious and very clear. I have a friend who says, "God is sovereign. He can do whatever He wants. He can have tomatoes grow in your front yard, but more likely, it will be grass or dandelions."

That is the nature of things; what you sow is what you reap. Galatians 6:7 says, "... God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." When it comes to this matter of manners we need to consider what it is we want. That will determine how we treat other people. Some people vent bitterness and sarcasm. Either they are empty headed, not realizing that is what they are going to receive, or they have such a low view of themselves they feel that people ought to be sarcastic, picking, and fussing at them all the time. That is what they are dishing out and that is what they are going to get.

Look at the Matthew 7 verse 12 again, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." You decide what it is you want men to do to you. If you have figured out

what you want, that is what you must do. What people do is what they are going to receive. That is a sobering thought. You look at some people and think, "Is that how you want to be treated? This is what you want to receive?" It is terrible manners to think, "I can give it and shouldn't get it back."

My father told me that when he was a boy there was a rather well-to-do farmer in the area where he lived. This farmer had a daughter and no sons. The farm would ultimately pass to the daughter. There were two country boys both interested in marrying the daughter. Whether it was for the daughter or the farm, draw your own conclusions, but neither of them were in line to get a farm, nor had the money to buy a farm. The one fellow made more progress than the other did in winning this farmer's daughter. He became engaged to her, which upset the other fellow no end. The "loser" went out and gathered up all of the Canadian thistle seed he could find and planted it in that farmer's fields.

Something happened to the engagement and it was broken off. Now the second fellow had his chance. He won the girl and eventually the farm. When my father was a boy all of those fields were producing large crops of Canadian thistles. He was reaping what he had sown. He did to someone else what he was going to receive. Be careful about sowing Canadian thistle seed because you may well be the one to reap it.

This becomes a whole concept of godly living. This is the law and the prophets. This is a lot of the Old Testament. One of the reasons that you do not lie is because liars are lied to.

The manners we sow are the manners that we are going to receive. There are three laws to harvesting. First, you reap the same thing that you plant. Second, you reap it at a later date. In other words, you can get away with it when you are sowing it, and you may get away with it for days, weeks, months, even years, but it will come in later. The third rule of the harvest is that it comes in multiples. Who would plant a potato if you would only get one potato back? Who would plant a seed to get only one seed back? The harvest always comes back in multiples. What you plant you will get back in larger quantities, the same thing, at a later date. If you want to sow a little rudeness, later you will get a lot of rudeness.

That is a Biblical principle in the matter of manners. If evil communications corrupt your good manners, you are going to be sowing some things to reap down the road that will come back to you. Some say, "I don't know why people always treat me this way." I could tell them, and sometimes I have told them, but it just does not register. We had a man and I did not know about his business practices until I listened to him. His explanation of his own business practices was this, "Every time I do business with someone they rip me off. They take advantage of me." I started thinking, if everyone takes advantage of him, and you reap what you sow, it is not hard to figure out what he had been doing. Many times, people are just receiving the natural harvest, for God will not be mocked.

There are others who say, "I don't know why people are so kind to me and why they are so good to me." I can explain

that. It is because, in the past, that is how they treated other people and God said what you sow you will reap. If someone is rude to you and you are kind to them, if you ever slip into rudeness with someone maybe they will be gentle with you instead of being harsh. These are the general principles of God in the matter of manners. Your manners can be corrected. Someone gave me some tapes and told me there was great Biblical content therein. I put the first tape on and am sure I did not listen even fifteen minutes. I rewound it and returned the tapes. The man's attitude and manner began to grind on me and do things in me that I did not need. I could not afford his anger and bitterness tearing me up, no matter how right he was in what he said. It would have made me sarcastic and harsh like he had become. I decided I would do without him as a person to teach me, because his manners were deplorable in how he approached things. I could not afford that spiritually, as I knew it would corrupt what good manners I did have. We need to understand this and be sensitive spiritually.

I can think of a certain man who is bitter and angry, and I will visit with him to try to reach him, but I do it in limited amounts. If I have to spend an hour or two with him then I try not to spend much time with him for a while after that. You say, "Don't you care about his soul?" Yes, but I care about the souls of the other people to whom I minister also. I do not want to become like that man. I need to get cleaned up after that, so I can be right. Evil communications from him are going to corrupt good manners. I do not want to be deceived and think that because I was

witnessing it does not affect me. Try witnessing while you walk through a coal mine and see if that keeps your clothes clean. It will not make a difference. It does not mean you live like a pig and wallow in the mire, but you will still need to wash your feet when you walk through mud.
MINDS RENEWED/ TRANSFORMED

Romans 12 deals with some teachings that will help us have and maintain proper manners as a Christian. We read in verse 1, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." I would point out first, how gently and graciously God approaches us in the matter of the surrender of our bodies for usefulness for His service. He does not attack us or berate us. He is very mannerly in His whole approach, which ought to teach us something about how we should approach others.

Back in the 1950's my father spoke in Michigan and came back telling of a curious event. A man came up to him after the service in the church and said that he had been working in the auto plant. The man said, "I am a Christian and I have worked there 30 years, and nobody has been able to discover it yet." He thought he was doing something wonderful. My father just calmly looked at him and said, "Perhaps God hasn't discovered it either." This man found a way to so conform himself to the world that no one suspected he was anything but what they were. Many Christians conform because they do not want to be different. They conform in music, dress, reading, or activities just to

fit the world's form. We are told here that we are not to be conformed to this world. Do not let the world shape your life. Do not let the world govern your life. Do not sink to their level and do not pick up the manners of the heathen for God abhors these.

Instead of being conformed to this world we need to be transformed. That is not a matter of being shaped but is a matter of being changed. If you have a transformer it will transform from alternating current to direct current, or from 220 voltage to 110 voltage. We are to be transformed and this is done by having our mind operated on. Not adjusting to the exterior world, but having a change on the interior, by the renewing of your mind.

There is a difference between your brain and your mind. There is a relationship, but there is a distinction. Your mind is connected to your soul and your brain is connected to your body. Your brain can deteriorate and create problems for your mind as far as being able to operate well or being able to express itself. You can drug the brain but that does not solve the problem in the mind. Mind problems are not solved by chemicals in the brain. There is a distinction in these two aspects. Recently there was a man who just came out of a coma that he had been in since the 1980's. His brain had been inactive other than just to keep some body functions going. When he came to, his mind was where it had been when he was in the car accident in the 1980's. He thought President Reagan was still the president. When they told him it was George Bush he wondered what had happened to Ronald Reagan that the Vice

President would have taken over. There was nothing wrong with his mind. His brain had not been functioning, but his mind was still active.

We need to get beyond the brain cells. You cannot renew or transform someone by electrical shock treatment. You cannot give them medication to make them spiritual. You have to work in the mind. Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:". There are a number of things about the mind which must be dealt with in order for us to be transformed. Manners can be displayed one of two ways. Some people "put on" manners or "act out" manners, but they are not a natural flow. In other words, they know how to act in certain situations, but it is all an act. Others are so changed that their behavior is a natural flow. You can tell if you are acting or if it is natural by what happens when you are under pressure. In what I call the unguarded moment, when you did not have a chance to prepare yourself and something caught you off guard, your response will let you know what the reality is inside as compared to the outside.

Some people are beasts at home but sweet at church. It is an act and as soon as they are in the car in the parking lot the real person comes out once again. We need to have our innermost being transformed so that the manners become a natural flow that comes from within. Then we will not need to worry about being caught in the unguarded moment.

In Romans 12:3 Paul begins to explain, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among

you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think;...” Pride puts other people down. Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. “... but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Learn to be sober minded, and to behave this way by getting your mind adjusted. Realize that God is great and we are not. The secret is that there are no great men of God. There are men of the Great God. The emphasis of greatness is always on God and not on the man. We need to think soberly of ourselves and not above what we ought to think. We are talking about the mind approach to manners.

Verses 4-8 deal with how you fit in the church to serve. “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” We need each other-- we are in this together. None of us can be what we ought to be without the others in the church. Verse 6 continues, “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;” Preachers ought to preach according to what ability God gave them. If someone does not like that, they need to talk to the God who gave them that ability. “Or ministry, *let us wait* on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;” There is a difference between these gifts. No one has all of them and everyone does not have the same gifts. We are dependent on each other. “Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth with

diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.”

In verse 9 we read further details that will help us in the matter of manners. Verse 9 tells us, “Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.” Search for what is good and hang onto it. That which is evil, hate it- put it aside. You do not want it. Do not try to look at a situation in terms of how it will work to your advantage. To be always wheeling, dealing, and manipulating. Verse 10 says, “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;” Prefer others with honor. Learn how to be kind toward each other, getting along.

Verse 11 continues, “Not slothful in business...” You don’t want to let your business matters slide. The verse continues, “...fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;” Keep in mind that when we work we are not to be a man-pleaser. We are working to please the Lord, serving Him. “Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.” These should be natural flows, helping one another and helping other believers every way possible.

Verse 14, “Bless them which persecute you...”. Do not kick them, do not fight them, bless them. Do not curse them, bless them. You say, “That goes against the grain.” That is our problem, we have too much grain. This “Bless them which persecute you” goes right back to the beatitudes that Jesus taught. We ought to rejoice when we are persecuted and pray for those that despitefully use us. This

is how we are to handle these issues. We do not compromise on what is right or wrong, but we realize there will be persecutors.

I think of a man I know in a Muslim country who was arrested and put in jail because of his activities as a Christian. They took him and did not tell his family where they were taking him, or what the charges were. They beat him day after day and he would just pray for those that were beating him, asking God to bless them. He would lie in his cell trying to heal from the beatings. After several days one of the jailers came by when no one else was around and asked, "Tell me more about this Jesus that can make a man sit as you have when he is being beaten." That Muslim man was saved, because this man took literally what the Bible said, "Bless them which persecute you." I know the man and the situation.

It is not easy to do, but it is Scriptural. If this man had fought back or cursed those who had beaten him, no one would have been saved. We are talking about Biblical manners and operating on a different level and plane than the world uses. It will help them see Jesus in us.

I have seen a number of people whose hearts God softened, by similar gracious manners. There is no guarantee this will happen for you. (We do not know that anyone got saved with all the beatings Paul took). You do not bless them because they are going to get saved. You bless them because it is right. If God works in them and saves them, then that is something to rejoice about. It is not that the end justifies the means. Just do what is right and God will help you and give you a

whole new outlook on things.

In verse 15 we are told, “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.” Do not sit back and say, “Well, they are happy now but they have bad times coming.” That is not good manners. Be glad they have a moment to rejoice. If you have a moment to rejoice you would be glad for someone to be happy with you.

When it comes time for weeping then you need to be ready to weep with them. When I answer my telephone at home I do not come bouncing on, “Today is a happy day! Hope you are rejoicing!” Someone might be calling over a death or sickness and I need to be ready to weep with them. Neither do I come on saying, “I don’t know what your problem is, but I sure do care for you.” They might be wanting to rejoice over something. We need to be in such a state and mind that when someone is ready to rejoice, we can rejoice and when someone needs comfort, we can comply.

That does not mean that we are emotionally unstable. It means that with good manners we are emotionally adjustable to help people according to their needs. We can stand beside them, being thrilled over joyfulness or sharing their heartache. To be able to do that takes Christian manners.

Verse 16 says, “Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.” Learn how to get down on the level of people that are down low and be able to adjust to it. Robynn and Hannah both have college degrees and did well academically. They

are working with those who are mostly illiterate or borderline, and in absolute poverty. Still, they are welcome in homes for times of death and sorrow and are able to be counted almost like family. They have learned how to get on the level of the people of low estate. We need to know how to do that.

Learn how to adjust and speak to folks that the world might consider way below you. We must realize their soul is as precious in Christ's eyes as the soul of a multi-millionaire. It is just as important that a destitute child gets saved as it is that Bill Gates or a President gets saved. We don't think that way, but that is why we need our minds transformed. We need a mental adjustment on this matter.

I remember at my father's funeral a professor from a State University attended. He came to me afterwards and said it was the most unusual funeral he had ever been to. It was held in his church on a school day, but students had cut class to be there, college and high school students alike. This man said he saw every strata of society, from the wealthy to the poorest of that area. He saw representatives of every racial group and education level. He said, "There were people from every group that your dad was able to fit in and minister to, and they were there to honor him at his funeral." As Christians, we ought to be like that.

We should have proper manners so that we could sit down at a table with upper-crust wealthy persons and there be no embarrassment, or we can sit and eat beans and bread where they do not even have a table, just a bench in a bit of a shanty. To be able to make these

adjustments is the utmost in manners.

Verse 17 instructs us, “Recompense to no man evil for evil....” You do not do wrong to get even. I tell people, “Instead of getting even, why don’t you get ahead?” What is the idea of just getting even? Who wants to be even with someone who is in that kind of shape? Let’s get ahead. Let’s live by a higher standard, on a higher plane.

The verse continues, “... Provide things honest in the sight of all men.” Not only must we know a matter is honest, but it needs to appear honest so that when people see it, it looks honest. You may say, “It may not look honest, but I know that it is honest.” Our manners are to be such that whatever goes on even *looks* honest. It is to be honest in the *sight* of all men.

Verse 18 encourages us, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” Are you not glad for the first two phrases there? It would be awful if you were required to live peaceably with all men knowing how some people are. If there is any way possible we are to live peaceably. Using any resources you have, any thought, any way you can approach it, live peaceably with all men. I am not talking about compromising, but I am talking of finding a peaceable way of dealing with problems rather than being on a warpath.

Verse 19 reads, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves...”. Manners tells us that if we are mistreated we should just wipe it off and go on. The verse continues, “... but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” You do not have to even the score with an offender. You need to

pray for that person because the Lord will take care of him. You may want to pray that the Lord would be gracious when He deals with him because He may deal strongly.

Verses 20-21 tell us, “Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” We need to be reminded of this, for this is at the core of manners; good is more powerful than evil. The world does not believe that at all, but good can overcome evil. Evil does not overcome evil, but rather evil adds evil. If we could learn that by doing what is right and using good manners, we can overcome what is evil and have the victory in the end instead of just multiplying the evil. Then we will be well on the way towards operating with good manners.

I had a teacher in high school who, for some reason, disliked me. I only had him for study hall, but he constantly picked on, mocked, and ridiculed me. I grew weary of it. So, I watched as the teachers sat at their table as we ate lunch. I noticed that every day when he finished eating he went over and bought something from the ice cream area. So one day when he was getting toward the end of his meal I went over and bought his normal dessert, took it over, put it on his tray, and walked off. Now he was really in a predicament because he had cut me down in front of the other teachers, as well as the students. Here I was doing something nice for him. He did not know how to handle that. He was stunned and let me alone the rest of the year. That was one of the best

investments I ever made. Do something kind for the person who wants to be your enemy. The best way to destroy an enemy is to turn him into a friend. If you can learn how to do that, instead of increasing your enemies, you can make good progress.

MANNERS TOWARD GOVERNMENT

Let us continue in Romans 13 as it flows from this mind-transforming kind of living and continues to instruct us in verse 1, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." God ordained government. In Paul's day they had a brutal, ungodly government. Caesars, though they were men, thought they were god, and expected to be called, "lord". They brutalized and killed the Christians. This letter was being sent to the Christians in Rome. There had been a time when Rome was so vile in their persecution that they ordered all the Jews out of Rome. That was why Priscilla and Aquilla were over in Greece and Turkey. They had been put out of Rome. All the Jews were made to leave because the emperor did not want any Jews in the city. He took the same view toward Christians.

Here was a group of Christians, and it would not be long before they were fed to the lions in the coliseum. But Paul said, "You be subject to those powers". You say, "That is not natural." No, it is not natural. You need to go back to Romans 12 again. You need chapter 12 to be able to handle

chapter 13. You need to have your mind transformed by God. He can help you bless those that persecute you; even a persecuting, brutal, un-Christian government.

We do not have the problems in this country at this time, to the degree that many other countries have, or have had. We likely will, and we need to be prepared for it. We must understand that Christian manners are to be in subjection to the government, and that we are to submit to those powers. You say, "They are not always right." No, and none of us are perfect yet either. You say, "But they intend to be wrong." That is true, and it was so in Paul's day. God put this in the Bible so that we would know how to behave in dealing with the government. We must learn how to handle this because with right behavior God can bless us. With wrong behavior we are on our own. We are not big enough to fight a whole government by ourselves. It will make us cantankerous, pessimistic, and fearful of what is going to happen. We are told to be subject to the higher powers, because God ordained them.

Verse 2 tells us, "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." God uses a powerful word for these that are constantly resisting, rebelling and fighting the government on every issue. You would think the government wore horns and had a forked tail like the devil, (although the devil does not really have a forked tail.) This seeps into Christian churches.

Verse 3 continues, "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.

Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.” Here is God’s promise, if we do good and we do not let evil communication corrupt our good manners, the government will have praise of the same. Verse 4 starts, “For he is the minister of God to thee for good....” God put him there to help you and do good for you. Verses 4-7 continue, “... But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”

MANNERS IN THE CHURCH

The Bible speaks of the kind of manners that are to be operational within the setting of the church. Unfortunately, in many cases, bad manners come to the surface and cause a lot of trouble. We will look in I Timothy where God deals with this subject of manners in the church. A church is not a building, but the people gathered together. When He makes a church, it becomes the body of Christ and

He is the Head. In I Timothy 3:14-15 we read, “These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” God has certain rules of behavior for us within the context of the church and we are to behave ourselves a certain way. There are certain manners by which we are to live in order to know how to handle these things. We are not free to behave as we may want in the church. We have allowed the world to introduce a lot of wrong behavior and bad manners, which has caused much heartache. I am not for compromise, but we can be mannerly in dealing with compromise. We can have a right attitude, for if we misbehave, we cannot accomplish good by acting bad. The end never justifies the means. The means of good behavior is necessary. God has this written in I Timothy so that we would know how to behave in the church.

Let us look at some things in I Timothy that will help us know how to behave in the church, the house of God, the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, the pillar and ground of the truth. I Timothy 1:4 instructs us, “Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.” We are to be cautious about what we spend our time on in church. We can run off on side issues and discussions that never come to a conclusion. Some peoples do not really want to come to a conclusion. They think the fact that they are discussing certain things and asking questions to which there

are no final answers make them sound spiritual. They do not intend to have anything settled. It is just an endless procedure they go through. They get hung up on one issue and then another, but it is nothing that helps the child of God. That is bad manners. That is like someone going to a social event, wanting to monopolize the conversation and asking the same questions they were asking 10 years ago. I know some people who have been asking the same questions for 20 years. They feel very spiritual and pious as they say, "I would like to ask your thoughts on...". Depending on who it is, I can almost tell you what the question will be.

When we have a missionary in, one will ask a question about a certain group of people, another will ask about certain cults. These are the same questions they may have asked these missionaries the last time they came around. They are not wanting an answer, they want to sound pious for having asked. One person I knew had a physical problem. I asked them, "Did you ask your doctor about it when you visited him?" She said, "Yes, I did." I further, "What did the doctor say?" She replied, "I am not sure what the answer was because while he was answering that question I was trying to figure out how to ask my next question." They do that to me in Sunday School class too. Sometimes by the time they get the question out, I have just finished the explanation of the answer. They were thinking of how to ask the question, not even hearing what I was saying. To them, the whole thing is, "Let's have a discussion and talk about this idea. That will prove we are spiritual." That is no way to behave in the church. That is not

what we are there for.

Verse 5 continues, “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” We need to strive in the matter of practical love, that which will get our hearts clean and pure. We need a conscience that is not cold and hard, but like it ought to be, and where our faith is not fake or put-on, but genuine. That will keep us humble when we come to church, to realize that these are goals we should have.

When we go home our conscience should be in better shape, our faith should be more real and more effective. We can more practically show Christian love to others. We ought to seek to accomplish that rather than show how spiritual we are. Do you understand this about our manner, attitude, and approach in the church? Some people are always puffing themselves up and bragging on what they have done rather than trying to learn how to do better. It has to do with approach and manner and these can become great bores.

Verse 12, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;” There needs to be a recognition that the person in the ministry was placed there by God. Churches do not put people into the ministry, and people do not put themselves into the ministry. God puts people into the ministry and He only puts ones in that He counts faithful. God is not going to put a person in who is up and down, back and forth. They ought to come and stay faithful. Of the faithful ones, God will then give them some particular work or ministry He desires for them. Climbing

the ladder in the church is bad manners. We need to let the Lord decide who is to function where and at what level. After all, it is the Lord's church.

Verse 17 tells us, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." Notice who is to get the glory in the church. It is not the preacher, deacon, singer, instrumentalist, Sunday School teacher, nor business person. The church is designed so that God would get the glory. We come not to get something at church, to be changed and become more of what we ought to be, but we come primarily to see that He gets the glory.

I remember a church I was trying to pastor. I had not been there long before they said, "You have been here several months now, and you have never publicly complimented the pianist and the organist." I said, "Oh, I didn't realize I was under obligation to do that." They said, "Well, that is expected. They need to be complimented." I was told if they were not they would quit playing. They were playing for compliments, they were not playing for God. Things got a bit awkward thereafter. I am not against complimenting people, but many people come with that motive. They say, "I don't know if I will go back to that church. The preacher didn't even shake my hand." "Do you know, after what I did, no one said anything from the platform about it." I am just quoting, but the ill-manners of the church is amazing. They plan to be the focus and get the glory, rather than the Lord. We come to give Him the glory that He is worthy of. He is to get all the honor and glory. We ought to come with a desire to

accomplish that. Our goal ought to be, what can we give, rather than what can we get. We ought to be changed, that is true from the early part of chapter one, but we are not judging things by what is in it for us, but rather, what can we do for the One that provides such a wonderful salvation.

When the Yankees won their last World Series can you imagine how ill-mannered it would have been if the fans thought they ought to be the center of attention. Or perhaps the press thought they should be the center of attention when they gathered to honor the Yankees. When we gather as a church we gather to honor our God, not us. It would be out of line to get this turned around. I can hear some fans grumble, "They never could have paid those salaries or played as well if I hadn't bought those tickets and shouted for them in the stands. I don't think I will go back because they didn't notice me. I always had a seat in the outfield bleachers." You say, "That person is really disgruntled. Something is wrong with them." Sadly, that is what happens with some professing Christians in the church.

We read in chapter 2 verses 1-3, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;" The first issue at hand is the matter of praying. We go there to honor and pray to our God that He will deal and work in the government, all areas of leadership, and eventually we are praying for men and women to be saved.

Importantly we gather to pray. Again, the focus is still on God.

When some people pray they remind me of a certain man I heard pray. I thought, "That was very prosaic." It was a lot of clichés strung together. Later someone said, "Oh, I love to hear that person pray." Well, they did have the organ playing background music. They were performing. When we are praying for someone else, we are not trying to draw attention to how well we can say the words. What kind of manners and mannerisms do we have when we come together in the church? Are we looking to God to accomplish something or people to hear how nicely we speak?

In chapter 3 verse 2 we are told, "A bishop then must be blameless,..." In other words, there is nothing to be laid to his blame. The verse continues, "... the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach;" That means he is not only knowledgeable but also capable of teaching. Verse 3 starts, "Not given to wine, no striker,..." He does not flare up and strike back at people when things do not go his way. The verse continues, "... not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;" He does not like to have a big battle and on-going ruckus. Verse 4 says, "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;" He is not only mannerly himself, but his whole family shows good manners. Continuing, verse 5 says, "(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" If he cannot deal with those he has 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, how in

the world is he going to help a group of adults he only sees a few hours a week? He must know how to handle things in a mannerly fashion, not as a group with threats and fears, but going about things in a gracious and Christian manner, firm yet thorough.

Verse 6 starts, “Not a novice...”. He must have had some experience first. “...lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.” That is bad manners. Pastors used to be the evidence of good manners in a community. Now we have some who claim to be Bible preaching but they are rather something of ill repute as far as their manners. It shows up in their home and eventually in their churches.

It is not only a problem that pastors have to face, but it continues in verse 8, “Likewise must the deacons be grave,...” It means they are to be in control and serious. Verse 8 continues, “...not double tongued,...” You can trust what they say. “Not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in pure conscience. And let these also first be proved;...” They have to be put to the test and put under the pressure to see if they can handle it. Verse 10 closes, “...then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.” The pastor is not to be a novice and the deacon is to be proven.

It is a general rule, called “the Peter Principle” in business, that you give promotions to a person if they do a good job. If they do well at that next level, promote them again. Keep promoting them until they get one level above what they can function and then fire them because

they cannot handle that load. They teach this in business education and then they teach you how to recognize when you are getting to your limit so that you know when to turn down promotions. The wise man turns down promotions that would place him where he cannot function. The church needs to know whether this person can stand the heat before they make him a pastor, and know if another person can stand the load, heat, and pressure before they make him a deacon. If he becomes a deacon and cannot handle the load, it would have been better if he had remained just a member of the church. As a leader it creates all kinds of trouble. Many times the trouble between pastors and deacons is that neither of them had sufficient screening under pressure beforehand to know how to carry the load. They do not know how to handle that particular level of responsibility. It is important to understand this.

I worked in several situations, and in one of them I was held partly accountable to evaluate men before they were put in certain places of responsibility. We were looking at a need to elevate a man into a position to get him prepared. Once they were in the new position we watched to see if they could handle the stress. This was preparatory because there was a position that would open in the future that would require a mannerly person.

There is a real vacuum in Christian leadership today. We are short on deacons and pastors who can handle the load in the church. We are short on people to head up schools, mission boards, and other various groups- men who are able to handle

pressure.

Many people can criticize, but to handle the load and maintain balance through times of pressure takes some preparation. You cannot just place a person in a position and expect them to walk with that load. They need to be developed. The church needs to know if someone can handle the load properly, or if he is going to go wild, break down, quit, or be destroyed. You can overload people and you need to know where their breaking points are.

When a person gets older you may need to take a little from the load. When a person is 90 years old they will not be able to work like they did when they were 30. Somewhere there must be some easing up. They may be wiser, but they cannot work as long or as hard. We need to understand this and have others coming along and being developed so there is a pool of potential workers for God to select and put into the ministry. There must be those who are already past the novice stage and have been tested and tried to be able to be deacons so that they know how to behave themselves in the church. This about the deacons leads right into that passage about how to behave in the church of God. These are qualifications that *God* demands so that there will be proper behavior, not only their behavior, but also the behavior of people in the church.

I usually instruct parents along the line that when they have children who become teenagers, the children along the way have been finding out if the parents really meant what they said when they laid the rules down. Many parents lay the rules down and then often do not enforce them.

Children will find out if you really meant “business” and will stay by it. Teenagers want to test the limits as to whether those limits are really valid or whether they were only discussion points. In the church there are people who want to find out if things are what they ought to be. You may have a pastor who is disturbed about others. He may attack what disturbs him and ignore the other. People will not behave right in the church if the pastor cannot take care of his own family. How is he going to take care of the church of God? There must be these qualifications so that they are able to govern the general tenor of behavior within the church. That does not mean that they dominate or control. They are not to be a dictator. If they are a dictator in the home, that would be bad news for the church. This is something the church should have checked out before-hand.

I have a brother who was on a pulpit committee. He said one of the first things they did when they were considering a man was to try to find out how he handled his home even before they contacted him to candidate. They wanted to know how he dealt with his wife, how he dealt with his children and how they responded. They figured if he could not handle that, they did not want to consider him. They knew the church would become a reflection of what his home was. They knew what they wanted and approached it that way. There is some wisdom in that. That is what God says here. This is to teach us how to behave so that we have proper manners in the church. We are a larger family, supposedly working together trying to accomplish the work of God where God has placed us.

In I Timothy 3:16 you will find that Christ is God manifest in the flesh. He is the focus and center of everything in the church. Then in chapter 4 verse 6 we read, “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.” In other words, you will need to start to teach them and bring them along to where you have progressed. The minister needs to have achieved certain levels, know how he got there, and know how to bring others to where he is. This is done by nourishing them, not by threatening them or ranting at them. It should be by instructing and working to bring them along to a level of prayer, holiness, service, and usefulness.

In verse 7 we are instructed, “But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself *rather* unto godliness.” There are some areas that are not even worth using your time on. Some people ask me certain questions and I tell them that I do not know. They may ask me something else and I may say, “I never studied that. It never did interest me. What help is that in my prayer life or in helping me be more holy?” They say, “I don’t know.” I tell them, “If I have time I may get to it sometime, but let’s discuss something else.” There is no use in wasting time with useless things. Refuse these things that get dragged in and stay with that which is profitable from the Word of God.

In verse 11 we are told, “These things command and teach.” There are certain things we are to command and teach. Verse 12 continues, “Let no man despise

thy youth...". It is a matter of what you have to offer and where you are spiritually, rather than your age when you present yourself. Charles Spurgeon was a teenager and he was preaching one time when an older woman in the congregation asked, "How old are you?" He said, "Wait until I am done preaching and we will discuss it then." When he got done he said, "I am old enough to be able to preach the Word of God and I hope it was of benefit to you." He left it at that. Sometimes we underestimate youth. Youth should not be despised just because they are young. In verse 13-15 we read, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." That is a whole lot different than fussing, fuming, fighting, and fun-times in the church. This is how we are to behave in the church. It is serious business. It is God's business and we need to keep things in line so that we can handle them as we ought. In I Timothy 5:1-2 we are told, "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat *him* as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity." My! How we need this in our church manners. We are to be holy and virtuous people. Verse 3 continues, "Honour widows that are widows indeed." Those who are really widows ought to be treated that way, and properly cared for. Ladies should be treated as ladies and we ought to know how to treat different people according to

what God has made them to be. We need to know how to provide for widows and provide for our own.

Verse 17 tells us, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." When an elder is one who rules and labours well, we need to provide for him double honour, which literally means twice the income of those to whom he is ministering. Many people would like to have an elder who does not get too deep in the Scriptures because they do not want to pay him a double salary. Some people want to have someone feed them heavily in the Word of God and then pay them half the salary. God said double. That is part of manners for the church.

Verse 22 reads, "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure." You must be careful about ordaining people. Do not get in a hurry about that and do not do it suddenly. It must be done with consideration, examination, and observation. You must approach this carefully. Otherwise you may be a partaker of what they would get into, and God may put their sin on both your and their accounts.

I Timothy 6:1 says, "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed." Servants, or laborers, ought to know how to treat their employers. Employees have a responsibility to their employer. If we are not careful we can end up blaspheming the very name and doctrine of God by wrong manners and attitudes. The church needs to teach people

how to handle these things. This is part of the good manners laid out by God.

Verse 17-19 reminds us, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” Rich people need to be instructed how to handle their riches. You may say, “I am not rich.” Are you measuring by the richest person you know or by world standards? Most of the world thinks that all Americans are wealthy. Nearly all of them have cars and that constitutes wealth to some people. We eat every day and we put closets in our houses to hold clothes because we have more clothes than we can wear at any one time. This is a sign of wealth to some people in the world. We have separate bedrooms for different people to sleep in. In fact, in our houses we use part at night for sleeping and the other part in the day for living. That is wealth. I have been to other countries and I am telling you that a small bedroom in America might be an entire house for a family of 3-8 in some countries. How they get them all in, I do not know. Many of them did not have windowpanes and they may not even be able to afford screens to keep the bugs out. They have no air conditioning, no heating, and possibly no running water or electricity.

We are rich by the world’s standards. What nation has to keep others

from running over borders and flooding the country with people who are willing to die trying to get in? Immigrants may load up in the back of a trailer to have a semi-truck haul them through the desert where they may die of heat exhaustion just trying to get into this country. They may get in a rickety boat floating across the ocean hoping they could make it to our shores. They have no money in hand, they just want to somehow get here. They will climb up in the wheel wells of a jetliner to try to stay warm at those terrible cold temperatures at 30,000 feet above the ground. They are hoping that when they get here they can sneak off at an airport. We have trouble with illegal immigrants all the time. How many other countries in the world have such problems? Everyone in the world wants to come here because this is where the wealth is. We do not think we are wealthy, but they do, and by their standards we are.

With that in mind, notice the instruction that is to be given on how to behave in the church. I Timothy 6:17 starts, "Charge them that are rich in this world..." maybe not in your county, but in this world, "...that they be not highminded...". You may hear one say, "This is the American way of life. The others just don't get to live like that." The thought that we are going to have our way of life and the others can do without is high-minded.

Verse 17 continues, "... nor trust in uncertain riches...". I know a fellow who lost between \$200,000 and \$300,000 in the stock market in a few months. Of course he had enough left over to still be rich. People worry about those riches because

riches are uncertain. There is no telling what may happen to your riches. We think that we do not have much but if we lose it we sure do cry and complain over what we lost. You cannot have it both ways. We like to cry, "poor" when we have it and "poorer" when we do not. We are to trust, as verse 17 states, "... in the living God, who giveth us richly to enjoy all things;". What you have you should enjoy, but you need to know this next part. Verse 18 tells us, "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;" What we have we should never look at as ours, for we are stewards. While we have it in our hands it is our job to distribute it.

Andrew Carnegie was one of the great wealthy men of American history. As far as I know, he was never a saved man, but he sat under strong Bible preaching his whole life. Andrew Carnegie quit making money at a certain point in his life and spent the rest of his life figuring out how to properly give it away. He said that a man who dies rich dies a failure. The purpose of the accumulation is to have it for later distribution--and that was from a lost man! He said that people who are best able to accumulate are the wisest to distribute. That is why many people cannot accumulate-- they would not know how to distribute it. Bill Gates spends much of his time spending multiple millions of dollars every month to try to be a help, not a hindrance. I am not shouting the praises of these men or saying that they are saved, but I am saying that it is a sad day when lost people in the world have a hold on this truth out of I Timothy 6 better than many professing Christians do.

We are not to trust in those riches but are to be ready to communicate, distribute, and do good. We realize they are given to us. Laying up in store for themselves, not just for a comfortable retirement, but as stated in I Timothy 6:19, "...a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." If you start trusting in riches, you will have trouble trusting God. When you become a steward of those riches you are going to be answerable to God to do it right. We have people in our churches who remind me of the Mormons to whom I tried to minister, going door to door. One of their slogans was they did their banking at church and did their worshipping at the bank. If we are not careful, we will be looking at things in terms of just accumulation and we will be stingy with distribution.

In Brazil the minimum salary for full-time work is about \$80.00 a month or \$20.00 a week. You might have to work 6 days a week to get that. Many jobs there only pay half the minimum salary for unskilled labor. There are people in America who make that monthly wage in a day.

Who is rich? What is wealth? A public-school teacher makes \$80.00 a month or \$960.00 a year in Brazil. Now think about what a public-school teacher makes in New York, and remember Brazil is one of the top 10 economies in the world. We are not talking about one of the poorest countries, as there are other countries much poorer.

We need to face some things about our attitude in the church when it comes time for the offering, praying, or

worshipping. There ought to be humility. God has trusted us and directed us, and we need to behave in a certain fashion rather than going to church saying, "I am here. I hope they appreciate me. Maybe I can accomplish something or get some people together so that I can direct what happens here." There are many ill-mannered things going on in the church. We ought to be so humbled before God. We have heard so much from the world that evil communications, even in the church with saints, has corrupted good manners. We can read I Timothy and our consciences are so hard that it does not even disturb us.

We saw how we are to have proper manners towards our government and be able to recognize them as the ministers of God, submit to them, and pay our taxes. I want to mention before we move on that one of the marks of apostasy, religious lost people, is that they despise dominion, speak evil of dignitaries, and are always tearing down any authority placed over them, particularly in the realm of government. That is mentioned in II Peter 2 and also in the book of Jude. The negative, the ill-mannered, and the lost are opposed to it, but the saved will submit to it and watch God deal with the government. Instead of trying to change the government they let God change it and do what is needed to live a quiet, Christian life in godliness and honesty as we are taught in I Timothy 2.

That brought us through the first 7 verses of Romans 13. This matter of Christian manners and living continues in verse 8, "Owe no many any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Instead of

there being a lot of hatred, bickering, and attacking, we ought to operate on the basis of love. Of course, we do not manipulate that way. Some people never do anyone a favor, for when they do something for someone they plan to collect big-time later.

This matter of being obligated and owing no man anything is not just in the matter of finances. You can have debts that are more binding than finances. They can destroy proper relationships. If you do something in certain situations for people, but you did not do it for the good of the person, you bought them.

A man once told me of a certain preacher, "I don't know what sin that man is in, but I can't say anything--he gives me too much money". That man had been bought. He owned that preacher so much that he could not do right. We should not get ourselves entangled. Do not get yourself obligated so that you cannot do right. Rather, keep it on a love basis.

Verse 9 continues, "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal,..." All these things are destructive in the whole realm of society. Continuing verses 9-10 direct, "... 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 neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Someone might feel obligated to me but if I really love them I am not going to force them to do wrong because they are obligated to me. Real love grants a degree of liberty. This is Christian manners at its finest. Manipulation is ill-

manners and God does not want us playing power games with people in the church, home, or any other area.

Verses 11-14 read, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." You need to learn how to put on Christ so that when people look at you they see how Christ behaved and thought. The manners that we show to others ought to grant allowances and liberties that Christ granted.

Romans 14 talks about relationships among Christian brothers and sisters. Verse 1 says, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." Some Christians are either newly saved, have not grown, or have been through some terrible time and their faith is weak. We are to receive them. We are not to say, "You don't believe quite right. You have some areas I disagree with." If they are brothers and sisters, then you receive them. That does not mean that you must accept everything they believe just because you receive that person. Receive the individual but not to doubtful disputations.

Some people come up with some wild ideas. I have a few such friends. Still,

they are my brother or my sister in Christ and I love them. I am going to receive them but not swallow all the things they come up with. I would be a sick man spiritually if I did. I am going to try to stand and be a Christian, being gracious and mannerly to them rather than saying, "I don't believe what you believe. I think it is stupid to believe that and, I won't have anything to do with it." Such is bad manners.

Manners do not mean compromise. You are not to receive what they have that is doubtful or wrong, but there must be room for toleration of differences. You have to allow a little room in areas for brothers and sisters to be wrong. That goes hard on us for we would like to get them all straightened out. Allow them to be wrong on a few things for if you happen to be wrong it would be nice if they allow you the same kindness.

I know a man now who went through terrible, terrible depression. Actually, it was worse than depression because he got to a place where he could not and would not fellowship with what he had been when he was first saved. He became so narrow that he thought, "This is what is right and anything else is terrible heresy. People who hold it can't be right." Yet, that is what he used to believe. If you ever had anything wrong in your life in the past, you had better be tolerant of people who have something wrong in their life now. Maybe in the future you will find that something you hold now might not be perfectly right. You will be glad someone was kind to you in how they dealt with your error. Read verse 1 again, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye,

but not to doubtful disputations.” Receive the person but you do not have to swallow everything they believe. You do not have to agree to it or promote it. You can just stand your ground and go on. This is the basis of Christian manners.

The passage relates some examples in verse 2, “For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.” They had vegetarians back then and those who were weak in the faith fell into vegetarianism. Notice it says that those who were weak ate herbs but others can eat anything. Realize there are differences. Verse 3 instructs, “Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not:...” It does not mean that you have to agree with it, but do not receive the weak *to doubtful disputations*. Verse 3 continues, “...and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him.”

Verse 4 says, “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.” It is not our job to go around judging all these other people, they are not our servants. They are God’s servants. God can deal with them and God can judge them. It is not our job to straighten up the Lord’s servants. They are not our servants. If they were ours and they worked for us perhaps we could straighten them up on the job.

I made a mistake a number of years ago. I had talked with a contractor in the area and he sent a few men over to work, a father and son. There were problems that came up between them and I tried to straighten it out. That was a terrible

mistake. I should have talked to their boss about it and not to them. I thought I was doing a kind thing, but it did not work out very well. In fact, it did not work out at all. I had violated the Bible. They did not work directly for me.

God has His servants and He is the one who decides who stands and who falls. God is able to make them stand when I may think they were going to fall. I may think "Look at what they got into, it is a wonder they have not collapsed already." That is not mine to worry about. God may be propping them up a little longer.

Verse 5 continues, "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Come to your own conclusion and live by the conclusion and convictions God gives you. If you think that you ought to celebrate St. Patrick's Day because he took the gospel to Ireland, celebrate St. Patrick's Day. If you think you should not celebrate it because the Catholics celebrate it, then do not celebrate it. Just to be clear though, St. Patrick was not a Catholic. What he believed was not what the Catholic church believes.

On St. Patrick's day, when I was in school, everyone put on green, so I tried to wear orange. They fussed at me for not having green. I said, "I am not a Catholic. I am a Protestant. St. Patrick was a Protestant and it is a day for wearing the orange. It is only the Catholics who wear the green." That caused no little ruckus. I do not know if that was the wisest thing to have done but I did it. I was persuaded in my mind and they were persuaded in their minds. I did not let them change my mind

on it. I guess I did not change their minds either. If someone does not come to the same conclusion you do, then live with it and accept it. As long as they are serving the Lord, they may have some doubtful things they do, but that is between them and their Lord.

Verse 6 adds, “He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.”. We need to learn that whatever we do, we are to do it to the Lord. If some eat vegetables to the Lord, let them eat their vegetables to the Lord. If others eat their steak and potatoes to the Lord, let them eat their steak and potatoes to the Lord. These things come up and sometimes Christians get out of whack on these things, judging each other and picking at each other rather than just receiving and realizing we happen to differ on this. Some folk’s toleration of differences is very, very thin.

We are never to tolerate sin. We are not to tolerate compromise, but we are to be tolerant of some other things and be cautious. A judgmental attitude will end up destroying us. Judging others is not our job.

Notice in verse 7, “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.” This is how the world lives, “I live for me and when I die, it will be for me. I am going to live and die for myself.” When a person is saved, the first thing Jesus said is that a man has to deny himself. Thus he is going to live for the Lord, not for himself.

Verse 8 says, “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.” We need to understand whom we really belong to. They are not obligated to us. We are not obligated to them. We are all obligated to the Lord. “Owe no man anything,” Do not be obligated to man, but be totally obligated to God, for He is the Lord.

I can recognize that someone wanting to judge me is unnecessary when I already have a judge. The Judge I have is a perfect and thorough judge and it is all I can do to get prepared to face Him. I think it was Abraham Lincoln who said, “You can’t please all of the people all of the time.” It just does not do to try to please people. Just try to please God. We are the Lord’s.

Verse 9 continues, “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.” We live, and we die to Christ because of what He has done for us. We are no longer slaves to the opinions of man or to the obligations of man. We receive our brothers and sisters. We do not have to accept everything about them. If the Germans want to pray after they eat their meal and we pray before we eat our meal, either way the food has been prayed for. If that is the way they want to do it, that is their business. If someone wants to eat their dessert before their meal I will not fuss with them. Sometimes I think it might be a good idea. Who am I to judge what they are doing? We need to be cautious in this whole area as far as the realm of manners. This line of thought continues through the chapter.

Notice verse 10, "But why dost thou judge thy brother?...". Why do you do it? Why are you going around sitting in judgment on this and that? "...or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?...". Why say, "He doesn't know anything. He is nothing. I have judged him and we would be best without him." The verse continues, "... for we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ." That is where the real judgment occurs. If we can do something to help our brother or allow him to help us get ready for judgment, then we ought to cooperate in that direction.

Verses 11-12 continue, "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God." We had a blind man attending our services and occasionally, I would have him sing the song, "I'll Face Nobody's Record but My Own." Some people are more worried about other's records than their own. When we get there we answer only for ourselves. There is no need to be judging other people. They answer for themselves and the Lord will take care of that. We can give them teaching on what is right, but to go around judging, hammering, and beating on them is terrible Christian manners. We ought to learn to have a degree of toleration in some of these things and get along with some people who are different from us. After all, we are different from them and we like them to get along with us. The judgment seat will help us prepare.

Verse 13 instructs, "Let us not therefore judge one another any more:..." Let's stop this sort of thing. The verse

continues, "... but to judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way." We need to be careful with our manners not to cause someone to fall on his face. We are to avoid that and do all we can to keep others from stumbling and falling. We need to assist them and strengthen them and help them along rather than becoming the cause of their downfall.

Verse 14 continues, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there* is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean." A lot of times it is in the eye of the beholder. Verse 15 says, "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." Be careful that your liberty does not cause trouble for someone else. You may have to trim back some things you are free regarding, to avoid causing trouble to other people. There are things that we do, not because it is what we believe, but it keeps someone else from falling or having trouble. If we are the strong ones we ought to be able to give up a little liberty here and there to assist someone else.

It is amazing how people say, "I am stronger than you are. You have all of these restrictions and I demand you drop all of these restrictions for me in my strength, so I can have my liberty." The strong should be the ones to give up their liberty to help the weak. They are to recognize this sort of thing. You cannot have it both ways. We are free to eat meat but if we are in the home of a vegetarian we will not tell them, "I won't eat unless you put a pork chop on my plate." We just

eat the vegetables they have. We might get a hamburger on the way home, but we are not going to sit there and eat it in front of them. We do not want them to struggle or have a problem that way.

Verse 16 tells us, "Let not then your good be evil spoken of." If you are right, then be mannerly so that you are not obnoxious. Verse 17 continues, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Those are the results of good manners, not warfare, struggle, and hurt feelings. Do not get hung up on the little things and destroy the important things.

MANNERS ON THE JOB

The matter of manners on the job is so essential. I have known people who were hard workers--good workers, but their manners really caused trouble at work. It hindered their witness because they were wrong in how they went about things.

Colossians 3:22-25 tells us, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." There are certain ways we are to behave when it comes to the job. We are to have a set of principles God has laid down for working. It is not just a hard work ethic, though that should be present. All Christians should work hard.

Consider, if you would, the fourth commandment, that six days you should labor and the seventh day you are to rest. It did not say we are to work four partial days and have fun the rest of the week. I know there are three and four day a week shifts but that leaves enough time to work somewhere else or do work around home. There must be a work ethic and Christians certainly ought to be hard workers. There is also the matter of manners that get destroyed on the job. I have known some that could do the work, but they would cause trouble on the job by their attitude. I can think of one particular person like that. They worked, and I think they worked hard. They said they just could not work if they could not talk to other people. They were always distracting other people on the job. They were constantly talking, complaining, picking, etc. They put out some work, but they disrupted the harmony of the other employees and caused things to divide within.

One person I remember as a tremendous worker. If they could be put in an office with a closed door and let them do their work alone, they would have done the work of two people. The problem surfaced when you mixed them with a whole group. Then the group did about half their work. It was not because the person did not work hard. They outworked the others, but they were just like fingernails on the blackboard. Sometimes good workers have to be let go so that the other workers can do their job. They are a fly in the ointment, so to speak. There is a chemistry to the workplace and a Christian ought to be one who improves the

atmosphere rather than hinders it. This is as it should be in the church. Each Christian ought to be adding, like grease on the wheels, to make things run smoother and keep things going properly. It is not just how much piecework they put out, it is also a matter of whether they can get along together. We need to understand something of the nature of work to understand Christian manners and how essential they are on the job. Sometimes a Christian added on the job makes production jump by far more than just by what the Christian produces. They enable the others to work better. They decrease stress.

Consider the beginning of verse 22, “Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh;...” The employee is not an equal with the employer. You may say, “I thought we were all created equal.” We are in terms of life, liberty, and opportunity, but we are not created equal in every aspect. Do you think every man is his equal in size and strength? No! Some people have better singing voices, some people are quicker with their fingers, and some are better in math. We are equal in opportunities by how the government is to see us, and we are equal in the eyes of the law, but we are not equal in every aspect. On the job the boss and the employee are not equal. The employee is to obey the boss, not the boss the employee.

There are some very bossy employees who try to boss their boss. That is terrible manners. If they work for the owner of the company, they try to tell them how to run their business. If asked for advice that is one thing, but some workers offer it freely on the boss’s time

instead of doing what they ought to do. They forget who provided the job.

Proper manners determine who works for whom. There is a line of authority and not equality. You might be brothers and sister in the Lord, and that means in the church you are equal. You cannot have someone in the church who has 17 employees who attend that church and they all have to vote the way the boss does. He does not have a voting block because of his employees. On the job though, they better listen to him. This is simply proper manners.

If you cannot listen to the boss, go find one you can listen to. You may say, "I can't find a boss like that." Then go work for yourself. If you know more than the boss, and you know more than the owner, then start your own business and do it better than they do. I have found most of the people who want to be equal or superior to their boss will not in any way work for themselves. They have all of the answers and know everything, but they do not have enough confidence to work for themselves. Somehow, they have a judgmental attitude and it carries right over into the job.

There is a second principle here. After you recognize the position, you recognize that is the boss you are to obey. Verse 22 instructed us, "Servants, obey in all things...". Well, if it is that wrong then go get another job. You do not want to be working for a crook and doing crooked work anyway. If it is not that, but it is just that you do not like to do that job, you are causing the trouble.

I have a son who worked in a degree of management at one point. He had an

employee he had told to do something, and the employee said, "I don't do that. I won't do that at all." There was some real conflict there. My son did not address it directly, but he put him at something else for the night while he figured out what to do with him. The next night that fellow came in and started on the job he "didn't do." The situation was that the employee was a black fellow who thought my son was taking advantage of him because he was white. That man thought he had special privileges. The next night he was working as hard as he could on this job. John asked around what was going on. They told him the man had asked to work on the job. That was what he wanted to do this particular night. John said, "But last night he said he didn't do that kind of work." They said, "No, he didn't last night, but he stopped at a bar on the way home and two other employees of the same race, and bigger than he was, came over and told him, 'You are a disgrace to us and you are making us look bad. You are going to have to go in and volunteer for that job and if you don't do it right we will be seeing you tomorrow night.'" That fellow's attitude changed towards his boss when someone told him, "He is the boss. When he tells you what to do, you do it. We don't take advantage of our race. We don't, as an employee, tell the boss what we will or will not do."

This is the way it ought to be. People are always trying to manipulate, but if the boss told you to do it, then get on with it. You sold your time, and now you serve your time to get your money. We need to understand there is an obedience in all things that is necessary in the matter of

working on the job.

There is a third thing here and that is we are not just to work while we are watched. We are to work whether the boss is watching or not. We do not work “with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart.” On some jobs the boss has to walk through ever so often to get people back to work or get them up to speed.

A Christian should be working at the right speed even if the boss does not come for days because he has a greater authority who is our Heavenly Father. He takes his orders from the boss, but he is working to please God who is watching all the time. He does not work to please an individual. A Christian can be counted on to be faithful and consistent.

I want to pause here with a few illustrations. Christian manners on the job and work ethic are understood in certain parts of the world like they have been forgotten in certain parts of the United States. The King of Jordan, King Hussein, was a Muslim but he needed someone to handle his correspondence as a secretary, handling the mail coming in and going out. He needed someone he could trust who would not leak information or use it to double-cross him. He needed a person who would keep on top of all that. He looked until he found a Christian to do it. He did not want a Muslim, he wanted a Christian. He thought a Christian must be honest and must be faithful in his work. For years and years, he trusted this individual, and the man's job was secure.

Sadaam Hussain, who has recently been removed in Iraq, was a despicable dictator, a very cruel and vicious man who knew

how to strike out against his enemies. He had a problem running things, he even had to watch his own sons and sons-in-law to the point he even had one of them killed. Others had to flee for their lives. We are talking about a real despot. He needed someone he could trust to oversee the affairs of the country who would not knife him in the back or try to take over. He found a Christian to act as his prime minister and he liked him.

In the Muslim world, Christians may be treasurers in big corporations. They have sensitive positions. When applications come in the first thing they do is shuffle them. If it is a sensitive job one pile is the pile of Christian names and that is the first pile they go through. They want to know if they practice what they claim to be. If so, they feel they will be able to trust them with the money. Christians are trustworthy and can be counted on. Here is the principle: the world hates us, but they cannot get along without us when our manners are right. But when we behave no differently than the world, they certainly can get along without us. We need these Christian manners to understand how to operate in a society that is corrupted. The worse it gets the more different we should appear.

Daniel could serve under the Chaldeans. He was Jewish, and there were racial issues. Another country comes in and puts out the Chaldeans with all of their government, but they snatch Daniel and place him in their government. Why? His work ethic, virtues, and manners meant they could trust him. They have many provinces and princes with three presidents to oversee their world empire

and he becomes the head president over the other three. All the others are trying to destroy him. He does not act like they do-- lying, manipulating, and trying to have them killed. He just goes on his way doing his job.

Even when he was thrown into the den of lions it was enough to make the King lose his night's sleep and worry about him. Daniel just went ahead and did what was right. The issue of right work ought to be normal, common Christianity, but we have allowed the world, with their evil communication, to corrupt the good manners of Christians on the jobs. In general, we have started to act like the world and we have lost our testimony. Some do not have the knowledge of God and God speaks that to our shame.

Looking at the matter of evil communications and corrupt manners, we come to the matter of work, the job relationship. Colossians 3:22-24 reads, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." We looked at several things. First the structure in a job situation. God has it set up that the servant is not the equal of the master. The employee is not the equal of the employer. Under the constitution there is an equality of rights and equality in the court of law. In the church we are equal, but on the job, one is in charge and one is to follow. One is to give the orders and the other is to take the orders. It becomes a matter of the servant

being obedient to the boss, not just in what they like to do, but in all things.

Keep in mind, it is the boss who provided the job. The employees do not provide the job. They take the risk, invest the capital, produce the organization and structure, and the employee gets a job there. If the employee thinks he knows more than the manager, if that is right and the manager is wise, he will ask for advice. If he does not, the employee can just hold it in. Certainly, he is not to be correcting or changing the person above him.

I can think of a case in World War II when the occupation troops went into Japan. There was an army major who went there and had a house with a Japanese garden outback. They were able to get an elderly Japanese gentleman to care for the garden. The American wife told the gardener what to do. She did not seem to want to ask any advice of the gardener. One day the gardener came by and offered his resignation. He said he needed to leave as the country had settled enough and he was able to get his job back. This woman thought, "I have paid you more than most gardeners get. Why can't you stay with me and keep this garden?" He thanked her for the job and for having paid him well, but said he thought he would just go ahead and take his old job. She pressed him a bit about what his old job was and it turned out he was the head professor at the University of Tokyo and was over Japanese gardening. She did not realize that she had the premier source of how to have a proper Japanese garden. He had just been taking her orders all that time, and she realized what an asset she had, and what she had lost.

An employer may not recognize in an employee just what he has until maybe someone else does and takes them away. An employer needs to be aware of this, but there still needs to be submission. The Japanese fellow, a Shintoist, understood the employer-employee relationship and had functioned by it. He had never looked down on this ignorant American woman trying to make a Japanese garden when he knew exactly what would be best. He just went ahead and did as he was told. It was her money and her decision.

We need to learn something there. If we learn that in the church we work for a Master who knows everything, the Lord Jesus, then we will be in submission rather than having a contentious spirit.

Unions may have been a necessity in America, but many people began to think that the Union gave them their job. The unions have never produced a job to my knowledge. They have tried to protect jobs, but they have never produced a job. It took others to produce them and that is true wherever you go in the world. It takes investment properly managed to produce jobs. The employee needs to understand this and if they are not happy with it, and believe they could do much better, then they ought to go out and work for themselves. The biggest complainers about their jobs I have known are those who have stoutly refused to work for themselves, even part-time. They cannot even boss themselves, let alone direct others.

We also need to realize that when we work we do not work to make the boss happy. If he is happy, that is fine and if he is not happy that is his problem. Our job is

not to be men-pleasers with eye-service but to please the Lord. In the final analysis the Lord gives His people their jobs. If someone takes a job from you, the Lord can give you another job. I will give you two examples that my father knew of during the depression years. This was a time when jobs were scarce, particularly in certain cities.

In one case there was a well-paying sales job for one who was willing to travel. They announced that at a certain time they would start applications and interviews. When this Christian arrived, the line was not only out the front of the building it was down the sidewalk at least to the corner of the block. When he arrived there and saw that, he realized that they were likely going to hire someone before he ever got in there. He prayed about it, went to a telegraph office, and sent a telegraph reading, "Don't hire anybody until you have interviewed me." and he put his name on it. It was only a few blocks away, so he had the telegram sent and went back and stood in line. He watched as they took the telegram in and it was not long before they came out and called his name. They hired him saying, "Anyone who knows how to get to the head of the line is the kind of person we want selling our product." God provided a job for him.

During the same time, another fellow who knew how to sell furniture went to a place where there was a long line of people that were interviewing for a sales position selling furniture. When he went in they asked him, "Why should we hire you?" He reached in his pocket and said, "Here is why." He handed them a sheet of tickets. Instead of standing out

there and just talking in line with the rest, he had been selling the furniture and arranging for deliveries, and he handed them all of the sales he had already made. They said, “Anyone who sells before they get the job is bound to sell afterwards. The job is yours.” These people recognized that when you serve the Lord, the Lord can open doors and give you a job as you need it.

That is not to make us passive, but we need to recognize that if we please the Lord when we work, then we can sleep well at night. Some people only try to please their bosses. Unfortunately, some bosses never are pleased. They think that management means to never be happy. If you please the Lord, you can sleep well at night. He can provide in good times or bad. He can do whatever is necessary to give you what you need. As Christians, our job will not be separated from our Christianity. It ought to be a part of it.

We not only should serve to *please* the Lord, but we need to do it *fearing* the Lord. On a job, they might allow you to cut corners, but the Lord may not let you cut corners. On the job they may allow you to be a little less than honest, but the Lord will not allow that.

You may say, “That won’t let me get quite as many sales.” I worked several of the years I was in college selling shoes. There were various tricks of the trade that people did to sell a pair of shoes that did not fit, but the customer thought they fit. Some people knew what their shoe size was even if you could not put it on their foot. There were certain shoes that did not have the shoe size in it and some would lie to the customer about what size it was. The

people would come back to them to get those shoes. It would be a larger size than what the person thought they wore, but I feared the Lord and I could not do that. I remember a Jewish boss who had no compunction about that. He would bring shoes in that were a \$3.99 shoe, but he would mark them \$4.99 and the next week he would put them on the sale rack for \$3.95. He marked them up so that he could mark them down and sell them at a right price. People thought they were getting a sale. If they asked, "What is the regular price on that?" I would say, "We just got them in and that is a fair buy." You can mark anything on the end of the box that is considered a fair and honest buy. He was not overcharging them- though he was the week before.

One day he called me back in the office and mentioned some of these things. I told him, "I have to do right according to my heart and my conscience and my God." He said, "I am going to give you a raise if you promise me one thing." I asked, "What is that?" He replied, "You don't tell anyone how much I am paying you because I am going to pay you more an hour than the assistant manager gets, and I will have a terrible time if it ever gets out." I said, "I think I can keep that." The Lord honored it even with someone who did not have the same principles. I feared the Lord and the Lord took care of it. I knew that if it cost me that job, the Lord was the one I was responsible to, and He could find me something to take its place.

It is good to know that we serve the Lord. We obey our master, but we serve the Lord and we fear the Lord. It is much like a wife with the husband in I Peter 3. If

the husband is out of line, the wife submits to the husband, but she trusts in God. She does not trust him, for he may be a scoundrel. Sarah could not even trust Abraham. She trusted God, but she obeyed Abraham.

This is a basic concept as we learn to be mannerly. We do not flaunt that in front of people, but it makes us a little more settled and keeps us from being in a fuss with our boss. We learn how to obey them and still fear the Lord. God will give wisdom and skill as to how to deal with these things when they get a little touchy. He can keep us from sin as we obey the boss. He can give us wisdom and skill for that.

Colossians 3:23 continues, “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;”. We need to realize that work is serving God and is a matter of obedience. We need to be able to pour ourselves into our work. Christians should never be slackers. What we do, we do heartily. It is a terrible disgrace to see a lazy Christian on the job. We are to do our work heartily to the Lord. We are to recognize it is the Lord we are working for and not man. The God we serve is the one we care most about. We recognize that we do not trust the job for our income, but we trust God for our income.

Between my senior year in high school and my freshman year in college, the nation was going through bad times financially. We were in a recession in America and jobs scarce. What jobs were available I was unable to get, as I was blind in one eye and not able to pass most physicals. I knew that God wanted me to go to college and I knew where He wanted

me to go. It was not the cheapest place, but I knew He wanted me to go there and that somehow the bill would be cared for.

There was a neighbor who wanted a tree cut, so I went over and started cutting a branch at a time. You could not just drop the tree with it sticking up through the electric wires, but I dropped it one branch at a time until I got it down where I could drop the whole thing. It did not pay much, but it paid more than working for Dad. I would just as soon work long hours for a few cents an hour as to work for free.

Then I passed newspapers. Another fellow asked if I would paint his house. I told him I would, and I think he was going to pay me \$30.00. This was back when wages were \$1.00 an hour and I knew it was going to take a few weeks, but \$30.00 was more than I would have gotten working for Dad, so I set to painting. Fortunately, it was all on the ground floor, a ranch style house, and I did not have to get up on any high ladders. I was doing a good job and doing it right, but he started finding all sorts of odd jobs he wanted me to do. I was not getting paid for those though. He was fixing a laundry room for his wife and putting up dry wall. He said, "Come in here and help me put this dry wall up." So I went in to help put dry wall up. After all, he was still my boss. He said, "I will hold it and you nail it." I said, "I think it would be better if I hold it and you nail it." He asked why, so I told him, "I am blind in one eye. My depth perception is not good, and you don't have to miss a nail too many times with drywall to see it." He said, "You are getting a scholarship to go to college, aren't you?" I said, "No." He said, "You ought to." I asked, "What

for?” He replied, “For being blind in one eye.” I just looked at him. I had heard of some crazy scholarships, but I had never heard of one for being blind in one eye. I said, “You are joking.” The fellow did joke some. He said, “No, I am serious.” I asked, “Who in the world gives scholarships for being blind in one eye?” He said, “The state of Ohio does. Didn’t they tell you this in school?” I said, “No. They didn’t tell me anything like that.” He said, “Just a minute.” He left and soon returned. He was a truck driver and he had picked up someone who had a flat tire out along the road. The man he picked up worked for the bureau of rehabilitation in Ohio and had given him his card. He told him about people who could not get jobs because of physicals and union regulations and all, and how they gave them college or vocational training to be able to get jobs. He still had the man’s card and phone number in his shirt pocket sitting in his bedroom, and he gave it to me. I got a partial scholarship for four years of college that I was able to use at a Christian school to help cover the costs.

That was the best paying job I ever had! I did not mind helping people do things that I was not getting paid for because when you work for the Lord “in all labor there is profit.” That is what we are told in Proverbs. When you are working for the Lord He has a way of bookkeeping that does not necessarily follow our idea.

Some people would have asked, “What do you mean? How much are you paying me to do these extra jobs?” In reality, I was working for the Lord and the Lord saw that I got paid. That man had a flat tire so

that the right trucker coming by could have mercy on him, pick him up and take him to get help. In the course of conversation, the card gets in the pocket and was still there in his shirt in the bedroom while I am trying to work on the drywall. God put all of that together knowing that I was going to be obeying *Him and serving Him*.

Do you understand what I am saying about manners? Some people are so hard they say, "Am I getting paid for this? I need to get a little extra if I am to do a little extra work around here." I would have cut my nose off and never have known it. I would have lost that opportunity as well as opportunities to minister to that man. I am trying to help you understand that we are to work heartily as unto the Lord and not unto man. We are not to do it with eye-service and we are not to be men-pleasers. We fear the Lord and we work because it is right to work. That is how God has established it.

When you lay hold of this, other things start making more sense. We need to know that we receive the reward of inheritance of the Lord, for we serve the Lord Christ. If the boss cuts our wages, the Lord can stretch our money. If someone trims here, God can help there. I know what it is like to have been trimmed and then watch God provide from other areas. I did not cut my work to what they paid me, I was not working for them anyway. I was not really counting on them. They had an opportunity to be God's channel to me and be blessed for caring for me. If they want to choke their channel off, then they are the losers. *I serve the Lord Christ in my work.*

This is a whole different concept of working than most of what we have in Christianity in America. We have so sipped of the world's brew and we have had so much evil communications compared to the Word of God that it has corrupted our good manners in the matter of working. God can open doors. God can shut doors. God can take care of you. It is humorous to me that during a time of famine, when people were bordering on starvation, and there was hardly grass for the King's horses, Elijah had meals flown in and ate meat twice a day! In many countries today where there is no famine, families are happy to have meat once a week. God was providing for Elijah. I often wondered who those birds stole that food from or if it was just a heavenly delivery. You can picture the contrast of people starving and Elijah feasting.

God can do that for His people, He has proven it. Can He not drop manna down six days and on the sixth day have enough to care for two days? That is food that angels eat and it came right out of nowhere, as far as man could tell. They did not have to kill off their herds to be able to survive in the wilderness. People cannot make a living in the wilderness today in that area. Yet, it could support millions of Jews traveling around for forty years in what is a definite wilderness of sand dunes and only a few trees. There is almost no grass, yet there was enough for their herds. God can do this. We serve the Lord and we are working for a boss who has unlimited wealth, an unlimited supply, and unlimited love and mercy. We can operate on a totally different basis than the world. If we are the servant, or employee, then we can

obey the employer and He can do as He pleases.

That will give you a little insight and background on how to approach things.

When you get your approach right, it makes it easier to respond right. You do not trust your job for that income. The job could die, but God will never die. God will take care of things. The advantage of this is that you do not become handicapped, it is the same One supplying for you who has always supplied for you. If you become old or not able to work, it is the same Person supplying as supplied before. Like Paul, you can learn to abound and learn to be abased, but in all things, you can learn to trust Christ and go on.

If this is our attitude toward work, then we are freed up from many of the cares and worries of the world. It will affect our whole approach on things. Persecutions cannot stop us and joblessness cannot stop us--we serve the Lord Christ. Keep in mind, in light of this, that working is one of the ways in which we serve God.

There was a man who used to come to a Bible conference years ago who worked for the postal system. He received a promotion and they called him in and told him, "You have been promoted to another job at another facility, but there is one difficulty. Your position here ends on a certain date and it is about 30 days until the next job begins. For 30 days you will be out of work. You will be able to collect unemployment, but whatever you do, don't get another job during that time." He said, "You mean I can't get a job for 30 days?" They said, "That is right, it will mess up all of the paperwork for the Federal government." He went home, and he had a

30-day paid vacation with unemployment checks coming in. The first Monday after his previous job had ended he got up and told his wife, "Pack my lunch." She said, "What do you mean, 'Pack my lunch'?" He said, "I am going to work. The Bible says if any do not work, neither can he eat, and I would like supper. I have told my children this for so long that I couldn't face them at supper if I had not gone to work." She packed his lunch. He was a little eccentric, but he was trying to be obedient. He started down the road and went to the first farmer and said, "I don't want a job. I don't want any pay, but do you have some work I could do around here?" The farmer could feel a lawsuit in the making. Here was someone who was going to come sponge, an accident might happen, and the man would sue. He said, "No. I don't believe I want in on this. It doesn't sound right." At about the third farm the farmer said, "I have some weeds in the garden I am not going to get to." The fellow said, "Thank you." and he went out and worked. At the end of the day he went to the barn to thank the man and went home.

He went back the next day and it was not long before the farmer was sending home vegetables and gave the worker's wife some work doing reupholstering. Then he gave the man some lumber to put an addition on his house. He was able to obey because he worked for the Lord. Here he was working for nothing and actually the Lord was taking care of him.

Try to explain that to lost people! This is part of serving God--that we work whatever our job situation is. Whether it is

working for yourself or for someone else, we are to be actively, heartily, busy serving the Lord. Thus, whatever we are doing takes on a sense of majesty. The world may say, "You are just scrubbing floors or cleaning a barn," but we know that we are serving the King of Kings. There is a sense of grandeur to what we are doing as we are serving our Lord. God sees all that we do, and our reward is coming from the Lord. If we get out of line, our punishment will come from the Lord too.

Consider some of these things the Lord sees as a person works on a job. I am going to name the negative and then name some positives. It is more than just producing what you are supposed to produce. More than just accomplishing the task. There is a whole realm of manners involved. For example, Christ sees whether we are bitter, lazy, gossiping, or backbiting. Some people might produce the desired work, but all the other things they produce are negative. They might be angry, rebellious, suspicious, dishonest, selfish, or always demanding rights on the job. These things evidence bad manners. The person may be working but these will still produce a bad atmosphere. God produces meekness.

It could be that we will be put under pressure on the job so that the people can see if we are really meek or not. We may be put through some trials as folks test us to find out if we are real or just trying to act good. Are we able to put oil on the water or do we try to light other's oil and get them to smoke? This has to do with our approach. Do we encourage each other? What about faithfulness to the job or contentment? You ought to work hard and

be content with such things as you have. Be content with your wages, opportunities, abilities, and energy God gives you and use them to their fullest. See how God may or may not prosper them in the future. What about the matter of cooperation or selflessness? What about honor? Are you more concerned about your name and your reputation than riches?

There is the matter of how industrious you are, the love you show to others, your honesty when it is not to your advantage. Your initiative, obedience, submission, longsuffering, and truthfulness. On the job we are given opportunities to demonstrate some Christ-likeness to the world and those who are watching. It will leave an impact. This matter of manners, people watch closely. Sometimes the sermon they see is louder than what we say.

My father died in 1981, and they had the viewing in the town where he had been living, Jamestown, Ohio. One man came through, shook my hand, and said, "I came because I wanted to thank you for what you did for my salvation. I know the Lord saved me, but I want to thank you for your part in it." I did not recognize the man. He said, "My name is Clarence." I said, "Oh, yes, I remember now."

From 1961-1965 I was in the travelling college choir. Clarence was our bus driver. He was a lost man and occasionally he would come into the services and hear the singing and preaching. We had a number of men, some of whose names would be well known today, who were in the choir. They had all tried to witness to him and tried soul-winning techniques. Clarence would smile and thank them. When I left college, as far as I knew, he was a lost

man. I had spoken a little here and there to him, but I had never really sat down with him and gone over the matter of salvation point by point. He knew all of the points. I was responsible to get the bleachers out of the bus, and one year we had a crippled girl in a wheelchair. Often I would be the one to put her on and take her off the bus and help with the ropes. I wondered why they were putting me in the choir because there were others who had much better voices. I figured they just wanted a go-for to do the work and a mascot around. I figured if I was going to stay I had better do the work.

Clarence had watched me and what he had seen is what had opened his heart. I had not known that he was watching. I had no idea. There were 32 of us in the choir. I was not watching to see if he was watching. There, as I practiced what I had grown up with, as far as manners, there was something that had touched his heart enough that he had come to my father's viewing to thank me, at least 16 years after I left college, for the part I had in his salvation.

We do not know who is watching. We do not know the impact our lives may be having. It is rather frightening to me that if I had not been mannerly, if I had been rude, what might have happened to Clarence. What might happen to some others who did not come to my father's viewing or I have come in contact with in the years since and I might never see until eternity. My manners and the fact that others watch how I live and the impact that leaves positively or negatively is a serious matter. I must understand that I am serving the Lord Christ and He will bless one way

or the other. He will use it one way or another.

If we lay hold of this, we will just go about *being* right and God can use us *because* we are right. He can place us where He wants. It may be that God has ten steps in a chain to reach a person and we are number four, seven, or eight along the line. We may not see the end product here, but we will have millions of years to find it on the other side. That will encourage you to get your manners right.

I will give you another example. In the Hebrides Islands off the coast of Scotland they had revival from time to time. During one of these periods of time Duncan Campbell was ministering there and told this story. On one of the Islands they had a large assembly and God had been stirring.

There were some Communists trying to get a foothold there on the island with the young people. Several of them came into the meeting one night and tried to upset things. As he was speaking one of them jumped up and said, "Prove to me that there is a God." Duncan Campbell said to him, "You want me to prove to you that there is a God?" He said, "Yes. Prove it." Duncan Campbell replied, "All right. Right down front here is a twelve-year-old lad. He is a shepherd boy. I want you to go with him from morning till night for the next three days. Then come back and tell me whether you believe there is a God." The man began to weep saying, "Three days? Three days? I spied on him today when he didn't know I was looking and in three hours I am convinced there must be a God." I wonder who is convinced there is a God because they spy on us while we are

working?

You may wonder, “Why is it that I end up with more trouble than others?” You may need to prove to others that there is a God, if you handle things correctly. You are going to show that you have something in you that they do not have. If you had life easier, like the Charismatics say, you would not be able to prove a thing. We serve the Lord God, and as we serve Him people ought to see that relationship in the mundane details of our lives. They ought to see that we have taken something that is drudgery for some and made glory out of it for our souls. It is a blessing. We serve the Lord Christ, not people.

Ephesians 6:5-8 says, “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.” If you do some good things as God directs, whether man honors it or not, you are going to receive of the Lord. You may say, “It has been a long time and it has not come.” The general rule is the longer it takes to come, the bigger it will be when it arrives. It is just gathering interest. It may take 50 years or more for a tree to grow. Lettuce can grow in a few weeks. How do you want to be paid? With a lettuce leaf or with a few logs from a big tree? You must have some patience to get the logs. Be sure we are going to receive

of the Lord.

Verse 9 continues, “And, ye masters, do this same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.” God has instructions both for the employee and employer. Christian employers ought to be a delight to work for. Christian employees ought to be a delight to have on the job. Why? Because we live by different standards, values, manners--a different approach and we handle work in totally different ways from the world.

The employers have bought a portion of the employee's lives. We are to be just in the handling of it. James 5:1-7 tells us how we are to take care of our employees: not to hold their wages back but to be equal and evenhanded with them. We realize that though we are an employer, we also have an employer and how we treat those below us influences how we get treated by the One above us. This should help us come with a right attitude in the handling of difficulties and problems on the job.

There is also an area of manners under times of persecution and suffering that you will find mostly in I Peter. If you read the book slowly, you will find how you are to respond to suffering and persecution. Lay hold of those things to see what kind of manners you should have when people mistreat you. You will find more of it in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 and 6. It is also scattered through the Gospels with examples in Acts and other places in the Scriptures where there is a whole set of instructions given on how we are to live under that kind of

problem.

Hopefully, these will give you some ideas on learning to have manners that will make you be different from the world. People will know that you have been saved and will have a desire to become like you. This is a great part of our witness. We still need to speak, but if we do not have a life backing up what we say then people are not interested. If it has done us good and they have seen that, then they are going to be more open to what we have to say.

MANNERS IN THE HOME

The home is probably where the biggest breakdown of our manners occurs --the time when we go to our homes and shut the door. This is a necessary area because it can often become a battleground when it ought to be a place of blessing. Instead of "Home Sweet Home" it becomes a place of real heartache. You will not get your manners perfect at home because none of us are perfect, but you can work to make progress. It did not say best or perfect manners, it said good manners,

“Evil communications corrupt good manners.” We need to have good manners in our homes. If we fail, verse 34 may come under sobering condemnation that we have gone to sleep and are not alive to righteousness. We have slid into sin and there are some who will not have the knowledge of God and we ought to be ashamed.

There is a generation of young people growing up today who do not know who God is, and their parents have taken them to Bible preaching churches, with some regularity since they were children. They have had them in Sunday School and may have taught them at home, but the children still do not know who God is because the home was not right. The parents did not have good manners in the home. I know this because I work with young people and children, and I find that this is common.

Recently, we were visiting in a home with three young adults. Two of them were raised in a home with a professing Christian, fundamentalist Bible believing father and one of them was raised in a church home where they went to a liberal church occasionally. It was the agreement of the three that the one who had almost no teaching at all had a better idea of who God was and was closer to being saved, or had been saved, while the other two are not yet saved. The one home built a wall between the children and the Lord so that their view of God is not the God of the Bible. It is sad. I have known the two of them since they were young children. They are now into their 20's and lost. The greatest problem is trying to make up for the damage that occurred in

their home. We spent much time talking with them. One of them had been away to college. He had been well educated in a secular school and had nearly fallen into the traps of liberalism and the practical type atheism because of what he had seen in his home. He said if it would not have been for some teaching he had picked up at church that protected him, he would have been gone totally. In other words, the church had been battling the home for those kids. This is an awful thing.

I have seen pastors' and missionaries' children with a wrong view of God. It was not because they were told wrong, but because of the home. Early in our marriage, I was called to the ministry. Shortly afterwards a few ladies took us aside. They had grown up on the mission field. Their father was one of the heroes of the Baptist mission work in Brazil and they had grown up there. They were lost and knew they were lost. There were three children. A fourth one had died in infancy but the three who grew to adulthood all died lost, so far as we know. They said, "Our parents spent all of their time on the heathen and didn't have any time for us. We don't know if there is a God or not. Whatever you do, don't neglect your family." That was good advice. We had not intended to, but that really drove it home. The home ought to be producing saints and laborers. That is not happening nearly as often as it ought to. The quality coming out is not what it should be. That is why I want to speak about the manners in the home, contrasting what is often happening with what should and could happen.

Let us see if we can lay hold of this because evil communications do corrupt

good manners. A daughter wrote about her dad who said that he believed if you took care of God's work that God would take care of your family. The only problem was while he had that bargain with God, God never had that bargain with him. The family fell apart and the daughter wrote the sad story of what occurred. He was the founder of World Vision. They got so involved doing God's work that they did not do God's work at home and there was terrible suffering of the children, as well as, eventually, of the parents.

Homes can produce great saints. That is how Joseph was produced. That is how Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Timothy, David and a host of others were produced. They can come from the homes ready to serve God. Even as children and teenagers they could minister, though they were cut off from any teaching thereafter. They could still stand against everything a pagan world could throw at them. Look at Daniel, taken as just a boy, yet he had had enough at home to hold him for life.

Let us look at how God ordained the home to operate. In Ephesians 5 beginning in verse 14-16 we read, "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." You do not want the days that are evil and the evil communications. You need to wisely use the time and even buy back lost time. Verses 17-18 state, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;".

Here God begins to lay the groundwork for the home. Verse 19 continues, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,”. There are three kinds of music for Christians to enjoy. The second half of verse 19 says, “singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;”. That is something different than the world’s concept of music. God has a particular kind of music for His people and that is necessary for what follows. If the thanksgiving is to be right then the music must be right, for it is part of the devotional life. Verse 20 continues, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”. Learning to be thankful and to pray is important. Verse 21 states, “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”

Let me say that there is music that builds rebellion, but Christian music will build submission, not to the world, sin, or flesh, but submission to God and to the lines of authority that God has established for His people. Sometimes you can recognize what is wrong with music by listening and sometimes by what it produces.

People say that music is neutral. They evidently have never listened to what they play in the stores or restaurants to influence customers. They have never tried to have someone sweetly sing “Amazing Grace” down at the bar and see if that makes them drink more. If music is neutral what difference would it make? Can you imagine playing something about the beauty of trees and all at a football game to fire up the players? After all, some

would have you think that music is neutral. They say, "It is all God's music if it is played the best." That is not what Moses thought when he came down off the mountain with Joshua. If that is so, they could have brought anyone in to play for King Saul. Instead they had to have the sweet psalmist of Israel, David, come play to deal with the demon problem. There is a whole list of things on music. Submission is evidence that there has been right music, right devotional life, right thanking of God and right praying. "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Our manners should be governed by our fear of God. We do not fear other people, we fear God. We learn to submit because God said to submit, not because someone is trying to scare us into it. I do not like people being afraid of me. I would rather they would fear God.

Continuing, verse 22 says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." A wife's attitude toward her husband may show what her attitude is toward the Lord. She is to submit unto her own husband not unto another person's husband, not unto another man but to her own husband as unto the Lord. As we are to submit to the Lord so is the wife to be submitted to the husband. You show me a life where the wife is not in submission to her husband and I will show you people who have children growing up not knowing how to submit to the Lord. It was never pictured right in the home. They do not understand what it is to trust or to believe because they did not see the example of their parents.

I talked to a teenage girl once who had come to the altar and wept and wept,

time and time again. Sometimes she wept a half-hour at a time, but she still did not get saved. I finally sat and talked with her a little. The father was on one side and I was on the other. The mother did not know what to do and she was of no help. I asked her, is there any man you can trust? She said, "No, why would I ever want to trust a man?" Her mother had taught her, "Don't you ever trust a man." So, she would not trust the Man Christ Jesus either. She had grown up being taught, "Trust yourself and *nobody* else." As far as I know the girl is still lost, years later. Her home put a wall between her being saved and lost because her mom would not submit to her husband. This is what she said, "I will submit to him if I think that he is right." In other words, "I will judge him, and I will choose what I will submit too." I do not think there is a whole lot that she has really agreed to.

Do you understand how manners can affect the home and cause damage, terrible damage? That young girl could not trust her dad or anybody and she never learned what it would mean to trust the Lord Jesus Christ in submission. She had never seen that in her home. She had been robbed of that. Evil communication had corrupted the good manners and here was one without the knowledge of a God who could be trusted. She had a God she could define, but she did not have a God whom she could trust. Thus, she did not have the God of the Bible. She did not have knowledge of God. As a pastor these things are of concern to me.

Verse 23 tells us, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body." The wife is to picture

submission to Christ by submitting to her husband. The husband has a harder job. They have to picture Christ and His love and compassion towards the wife, picturing how Christ loves the church. The brute beast husbands or neglectful husbands give an absolutely wrong picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. The children grow up and they do not know how to trust or who to trust and their whole idea of Jesus is warped because of the home.

Christ is the head of the church. The husband is to be head of the home. One way for a man to frustrate a wife is to never give her anything to submit to, saying, "You make up your own mind. You decide." They give no leadership, no direction, lay down no principles, and give no guidelines. They may even try to act as mean as the devil instead of as sweet as Christ. It will destroy the children. Manners in the home influence people having a knowledge of God. Our homes ought to be able to give pictures of God to our neighbors. If you live 3 miles from the next person you may not have the same problems as if you lived in a subdivision or apartment house where they can hear the screaming and yelling. I really would not find it beneficial to visit certain people I know because of the certain man who rants and raves at his wife in a loud voice and has for years. There would not be any use for me to go. He has destroyed the whole concept of God and salvation to his neighbors. He has poisoned them so that I cannot do them any good either. He also did this for his children and a host of other people, because he was ill mannered. Like it says in Jude, "brute beasts."

We are talking about what we should picture in the matter of the home. Remember how Christ deals with the church. He is the savior of the body. Verse 24 continues, "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." I am just going to pause here, to talk about wives and their husbands, and that gentle, gracious, but clearly defined relationship carried on in a proper, mannerly way. It is to reflect that of the church, which is subject unto Christ.

A true church is not subject to the pastor. It is not subject to the deacons or the deacon board. A true church is not subject to votes of the congregation. A true church is subject unto Christ. He is the Head of the church, the owner of the church, the builder of the church, the director of the church, and is the most important person in the church. We know that in our heads, and we need to understand how He works with the church, so we know how the home is to operate.

If a man wanted to get rid of his wife, one of the easiest ways to do it would be to leave a church that is obedient to Christ and go to one where the people make up their own minds about how they are going to run it. He will teach his wife to quit listening to him, to make up her own rules, go wherever she wants, and have the authority she wants. That will help break up their relationship quickly. I have watched over the decades, people leave a church that was obedient to Christ, whether it was for games, gimmicks, entertainment, or whatever. They went somewhere that was not as obedient to Christ and they thought they were getting

what would make them happy, though it certainly would not make them holy. They ended up with terrible heartache in their home and some even lost their home relationship. I am not threatening, but I want you to see what the verse says. This is God's Word on this relationship. "... as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." They go to a church where the church is not subject to Christ, so the wife will not be in submission to her own husband. A woman picks up on a church that is subject to Christ only when it is convenient. That is exactly how it works.

Let me use an illustration to shed some light on this. Our church sent a couple out to the mission field. They became defiant against the church and its authority. They came back in before they should have for several months over the summer. Then they demanded that the church no longer exercise any authority over them, just support them. They would go without any authority back to the field. The husband demanded that. I was greatly concerned. I did not know what was wrong, but I knew that something was wrong. I knew that somehow, we had to get them back over into Europe. Off they went.

What he did not know was that while he was negotiating his freedom of authority from Christ and the church, she was working behind his back with his best friend. Just months later I caught the missionary wife and her husband's best friend on a mountain road in Pennsylvania. We found them in the house where they were staying. I had already notified the

deacon board that we were having a meeting that night and I just informed them that they needed to show up. What had happened? They did not want right authority as far as the church and ended up with no authority in the home. I could site other cases just about the same, but perhaps not quite as crystal clear. I cannot tell you exactly when it began, although the two who got together should not have been together, but I know it started during the same weeks that they were saying, "We do not have to listen to Christ and the church. We can be missionaries on our own." I am not threatening. I am saying we need to open our eyes and realize that God has this authority set up to run in a properly, orderly fashion and when we violate it we pay the consequences.

The passage continues in verse 25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;". There are three concepts of love. The first is physical or fleshly. This is what Hollywood talks about. That is not what this verse is talking about. The second is soulish and has to do with the soul. Soulsh love questions, "What is in it for me?" Some may say, "I am not getting anything out of this marriage. I fell out of love." Maybe you had the second kind of love. You might lose on the first one or redirect in another direction, but those are not what this verse is talking about.

The third kind is not what you feel, the lust; not what you get, the soul; but what you give, the spiritual. This love is measured by sacrifice. Notice, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." This

is a giving love and is measured by how much you give, not by how much you get or how you feel. That is real love. Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. He *died* for us!

I counsel with couples and I realize that some “snow” the preacher when they can. I may ask her, “Do you love him?” She says, “Oh, yes!” I ask him, “Do you love her?” He replies, “Oh, yes!” Then I ask, “Are you ready to die for her? Are you ready to sacrifice for her? What would you give up for her?” Eventually they try to figure out what answer I am seeking. Some of them have the right answer. When a man wants to marry a woman, he ought to love her as Christ loved the church and be ready to die for her, be ready to give anything and everything that he has for her. That is love. This will create proper manners, rather than a beast-like Hollywood type approach or a self-centered manipulative approach. I am talking about manners in the home. The husband-wife relationship is so essential.

Notice in verses 26-28 He loved us, “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.” The relationship of a husband to his wife ought to be like that of Christ to the church in how he graciously, kindly, constantly, and with continual attention works with us to make us what we ought to be. If a man complains about his wife he is saying, “I am a failure”. God has enabled the

husband, by having right manners and approach, to make her what she ought to be. I Peter 3 tells us that God has also enabled the wife to make the husband what he ought to be. So, if she complains about her husband she is saying, "I am a failure." I have people say to me, "I don't know why I ever married her. She is getting worse and worse." Or "I don't know why I married him. I thought he was all right at the beginning and I don't know why he keeps getting worse." They are both confessing their failures and now I know where to start. Of course, when I get started they both get mad at me, but at least they then have one thing in common. They have a common enemy they can talk about and that will at least get them talking again. I blame him for what she became, and I blame her for what he became and that was not exactly what they had hoped for. They thought I would side with one or the other.

We need to understand that the love and manners of Christ picture the love and manners of the husband to the wife. The husband needs to do that because of an on-looking world, because of what God has done in his heart, and he should show it to his wife. He needs to do it for the sake of children, relatives, and others around. Instead of ill-mannered arguments, fusses, fights, hollering, and everything else that goes on behind closed doors, it ought to become home sweet home, a picture of Christ working with the church and the church submitting to Jesus Christ. This will not happen quickly or easily, but these are the manners that need to be put into place.

Verse 33 reads, "Nevertheless let

every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” That is pretty strong language. Ephesians 6:1 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.” You may say, “But my father wasn’t that honorable.” Honor him anyway. It did not say honor him because he was honorable, you honor him because he is your father. You do not have to be blind to his failures, but you honor him because he is your father. You honor your mother because she is your mother. Do not get bitter against them.

Chapter 6 continues, “Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath:”. Men, we need to realize that children and ladies are often more sensitive than men are. We might be a bit roughshod in our humor or our comments. I became fearful of this text one day, that I may cross over the line with my children and provoke them to wrath. I granted them permission to memorize that and quote it if I was at the border. That way they could help keep me from crossing it, not to take advantage of me, but just to help me because I did not want to disobey God. They still honored me, but they were willing to let me know when I was about to cross that line. I was thankful because sometimes I did not know that I was close. Verse 4 is clear when it says, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” That takes time and the father’s time.

Rescue missions used to have signs,

“Your mother is praying for you.” It has gotten so bad that they have to take them down because most of the fellows mothers do not pray. I always thought it was pitiful that it was, “Your *mother* is praying for you.” Rather than, “Your father is praying for you.” Most people, if they told you what they learned from the Bible at home, it almost exclusively was from the mother. It did not say, *Parents*, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This is a responsibility for the father. The mother can assist, but it is the father’s responsibility to oversee and care for this in the raising of the children.

It is not enough to put a roof over the head, clothes on the back, and food on the table. This is where many homes miss it. Many men do not know how to nourish someone in the Word of the Lord. I had forgotten some things as my children grew up. Then I had a grandson born and I decided it was time to teach him a Bible story. I know kids like David and Goliath, so I began to describe that story. He cried, and cried, and cried, and cried. They suggested I tell another one, so I told about Jesus feeding the five thousand and he got happy. I told him every food story I could think of in the Bible and he liked those. He was not ready for cutting off the heads of giants and blood dripping everywhere. A father has to know just where and how to nourish the child and instruct them along the way. It is a responsibility that God places on us as men. Family altar is a part of this, but it is not all of it.

Verses 5-9 deal with the matter of employee and employer relationships on the job. In verse 10 we get to the matter of

spiritual warfare. Here is something to think about, from chapter 5 verse 18 where we are told to be filled with the Spirit, to chapter 6 verse 10, where we are to be in spiritual warfare. There is a bridge starting with music and devotional life, ending with the job life. The majority of the bridge is the home though. That is what binds it together. We cannot fight the spiritual battles today if we really do not know much of the filling of the Holy Spirit. Half a verse tells about being filled with the Spirit. The next 10 verses are spiritual warfare, but how many verses on the home? That is God's emphasis, not mine. Evil communications will corrupt good manners. People will tell you that you can do it this way or that way. You better find the good manners God established to run the home.

I Peter 3:1, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;". Even without Scripture, the wife, living right, can get the husband straightened out. Verses 2-6 tell how the wife can do this. She should not be a loud mouthed, brazen babbler. Instead, she should be one with chaste conversation, one who is meek and mild in her appearance, who has the hidden man of the heart, the meek and quiet spirit within her. She should know how to trust God by letting Him handle things instead of trying to do things according to her own understanding.

I Peter 3:7 starts, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge;". Not according to who is strongest, loudest, or who can manipulate.

He is to have knowledge to know how to properly handle things in the home. The verse continues, "...giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel,". That will cover a whole host of manners, how he is to honor, care for, and provide for her in these particular areas. The verse continues, "... and as being heirs together of the grace of life;". The home ought to be marked by grace rather than growls. This is, according to the end of verse 7, "... that your prayers be not hindered." There ought to be a prolific prayer life in the home.

Verses 8-9 say, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing;". Defuse difficulties instead of exploding them. Verse 9-12 continues "... knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." Evil communication will corrupt good manners. There is a whole string of words and phrases there that will apply to how manners ought to be displayed in the home.

Here are the general guidelines, some for the wife, some for the husband, and then some for them together. The home is a place where lessons of loyalty ought to not only be spoken, but also illustrated. There should be honesty

shown, love demonstrated, kindness should be common, and work habits instilled. Values should be made real, goals established, sin exposed as sin, repentance be real, and forgiveness practiced. We need to learn how to get along with those who differ under our own roof. Learn how to pray together and study the Bible together. Learn how to let the Lord be Lord and learn how leadership is established. Learn how to be generous, how to give, how to tolerate, how to adjust, and how to be adaptable. Learn how to cooperate, to be in submission, and follow those who are giving direction to the home. Learn the rules of obedience. Follow the rules of the home. Learn that when you make an agreement you keep it, even if it costs you heavily. Learn to be gracious, learn to accept correction, and learn to help others. The home is where a lot of learning needs to be done, for there is a lot to be covered. It should not be a war zone. It ought to be a learning experience where people come out of the home prepared for life and ministry and for usefulness to God. We need to be able to establish homes that will operate properly to influence future generations.

In the book of Psalms the Bible makes it clear that our goal should not just be to influence our children. We need to also illustrate, help, and teach them, so that they will be able to help their children. These should then be so influenced and affected by what we started that they will reach yet a fourth generation, our great-grandchildren. That is Biblical. When homes are run right with good manners it will seep down to other generations.

I know some lost people who, if you

could trace it back enough generations, you would find there were some godly homes, Christian principles, and good manners established that have leaked down to some degree or another to even the present generation, with beneficial results. There must be good manners in the home. It will not be easy, but it is surely necessary. If we do not follow this, we will need to awake to righteousness and stop our sinning because there will be some who will not have a knowledge of God. I think of my father's cousins. They died without a real knowledge of God as far as we could tell. Their Dad started over 50 churches and lost his own kids. Maybe that will help you understand God, the Bible, and the home.

Let me give you a brief outline for your own, personal future studies. Some have manners like those of animals as we saw in II Peter 2 and Jude where they operate as brute beasts. That is one step above animal-like manners. Then there are the manners of angels. Angels were a higher creation than man was, as man was made a little lower than the angels. Then there are the manners of the believers. We have been raised up above all principalities and powers and seated in Christ in heavenly places. We are to have manners exceeding those of the angels and far above those of the world. Our manners are to be very God-like just as were the manners of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was God in the flesh.

Here you have your strata of manners. A person can determine at what level of manners they are operating. It is a terrible thing in our country that the teaching of evolution has taken people from human

levels and dropped them to animal-like levels in their behavior. The teachers have brought on themselves the pandemonium that they have in the classrooms. The sad thing is when people think that those manners are acceptable in the church of the Living God. They ought to be operating with God-like manners.