

How Can a Man or Woman Be Right with God? IV

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Can you please God? This is the whole purpose of why we're here. Sometimes we get a guilty conscience because we think:

- God doesn't hear us
- I'm a sinner
- How can God love me?
- If God loves me why am I going through trials?

Let's take a broader picture of it and see that, yes, you can please God. We'll see how that can be done.

First of all, let's see how the world does. We're going to see some very interesting things as to why people are cutoff from God. I think it's reflected more and more in our society because of the way that this modern culture is, with all of its technology and everything.

Let's see what cuts us off from God, then we can understand how we can please God.

2-Timothy 3:1: "Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come." Notice that it doesn't tell us how long they will be.

Let's see what else takes place in the end-time, coupled with the perilous times.

1-Timothy 4:1: "Now, the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the faith, *and* shall follow deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons." This is talking about what's happening within the Church. So, there are two things going on:

1. what is happening in the Church
2. what is happening in the world

Of course, those of us in the Church live in the world, so both of these things affect us.

Verse 2: "Speaking lies in hypocrisy, their consciences having been cauterized *with a hot iron...* [then it says what they do]: ...forbidding to marry; *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, even *by* those who know the Truth" (vs 2-3).

That means that if it's listed in the Bible and it's what God says that we can eat, that's what we can eat. However, in the modern age you need to be careful. They do so much to the food—the meat and the vegetables—and it's hard to get organic food, but it's available; you have to look for it. This is one of the things that confronts us in the world.

In 2-Tim. 3 we find the source of all problems; this is the beginning source of all

problems, troubles and difficulties. This can be with:

- your life
- your marriage
- your job
- relationships with other people

2-Timothy 3:2: "For **men will be lovers of self...**" They teach children *self-esteem!* The more self-esteem they teach them, the more selfish they become. That's the first thing that they love: *self!* It's also called, in psychological terms, *narcissistic!* If you're a narcissist, you only think of self.

I think we can think of a couple of past presidents that they have done nothing wrong, that it's a great 'rightwing conspiracy,' the press, and everybody but themselves. That's a perfect example of someone who is narcissistic! They won't receive any correction, won't listen to anybody else and all their problems someone else caused.

"**...lovers of money...**" (v 2). That's why we're in the financial trouble we're in, people going out and trying to get things that they ought not get.

- they lie
- they cheat
- they steal

I think the government is the greatest lover of money, because it takes most of it.

"**...braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy...** [sounds like the TV guide] ...without natural affection..." (vs 2-3). Therefore, there are murders, killing, throwing away children/babies, abortions.

"...implacable..." (v 3). Won't take any correction. A man who was a contractor kept parking his equipment in the front of his house, and it was against the city ordinance, so he's had a battle with the city for seven years. They kept giving him tickets for putting his equipment where it shouldn't be. So, he wouldn't take any correction, he would not change anything. He got out his gun, wrote a suicide note, walked down to the City Council and killed a police officer on the way in, and then shot those on the City Council who he thought was responsible for harassing him. All he had to do is move his equipment someplace. That would not have been hard.

But this also tells you that when you have people who are implacable, you also have a lawlessness that reigns.

There have been shootings and killings one

right after the other. What happens when people are implacable and love themselves and are narcissistic, then they take the law into their own hands and they become ‘judge, jury and executioner’ against those whom *they think* are causing the problems that they are suffering. Tie that in with demonic spirits!

“...**slanderers...**” (v 3). First thing they do is get a writ out of context and you’re dead. You can’t recover.

“...**without self-control...**” (v 3). That implies everything:

- sexually
- with money
- what you do
- lack of restraint

“...**savage, despisers of those who are good**” (v 3). Of course, you know that it is in some ways foolish to be a Christian today in the way that some people think. But just hold on, because there are going to be events that make people wake up to some of the problems that they’re confronting. We will know what the problems and difficulties are when they come, because God’s Word has forewarned us!

Verse 4: “**Betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.**” So, we have three things that they love:

- self
- money
- pleasure

Let’s talk about *pleasure*, because pleasure is interesting. Today, if it looks good, sounds good, feels good—whether it is illegal or legal—people get involved in it because they want pleasure. Look at any sports event, especially college, if you tried to talk to those young people concerning God and Christ, they would laugh right smack in your face.

They want to have a good time, fun, and it’s been promulgated and they have been taught that if you have a good time, or it pleasurable, then it’s good thing to do. When you are a lover of pleasure then you don’t ask what is right and wrong. That creates the problem. “...**rather than lovers of God.**”

Joel Osteen is preparing all those who go to his services—16,000 every service. Watch him sometime. He talks about good and appeals to the goodness of human nature. If you love yourself, you want to be told how good you are.

If you’re a lover of money, you want to be told that your best days are ahead of you, even though the stock market is going to collapse. If you’re a lover of pleasure, you want to do things that are nice and good. If it says that you’re to keep the commandments of God in order to love Him, that’s

requiring just a bit too much.

Verse 5: “Having an outward appearance of Godliness, but denying the power of *true* Godliness....”

I watched Osteen one Sunday and I’ve noticed the logo on the bottom of his podium, which actually looks like Aladdin’s lamp. It’s a New Age symbol by the elite that he has approved.

What did Jesus say? *Broad is the way and many people will go therein, but narrow is the way and straight is the way that leads to life!* At the end of his telling everyone how good they are, expect nothing but good, then he says, ‘I want you to say this prayer; repeat after me so you can be saved’:

Jesus, I repent of my sins and enter into my heart.

You’re saved! *Doesn’t quite work that way!* What is happening? Why is Osteen being promoted? You need to connect the dots. An outward appearance of Godliness you could also call ‘religion’; they’re religious. You have modern evangelicalism now reducing the requirements of what it is to be a Christian in their definition.

- you believe
- you accept Jesus
- you don’t have to be baptized
- you don’t have to keep the commandments

Whatever is good and it feels good to you, because you’re a lover of pleasure and self, then that’s fine. That’s almost what Joel Osteen is preaching.

I haven’t kept up on some of the others, because we don’t have a ‘religious’ channel in Hollister, so I can only catch a few on Sunday morning once in a while. Ophra Winfrey is going to get in on the act, because she’s going to have *A Course in Miracles* based on the book. The author, a woman, said that Jesus talked to her and told her to write. The ultimate is that you are good, there is no such thing as sin, and that you, as you are, are ‘God.’ That is the most narcissistic form of ‘Godliness’ that you could possibly have. You worship yourself as ‘God.’ It’s like Deepak Chopra in his *Seven Steps to Spirituality* is almost identical to *A Course in Miracles* that Ophra Winfrey is having this woman give on her program on radio. It’s almost the same!

You begin over here and you begin to understand as you move toward: What is God? What happens is that you connect with your soul. In an instant of time you connect with your soul and you understand that you are ‘God.’ When you pray, you’re praying to yourself.

So, when you pray it’s, v 5: “having an outward appearance of Godliness, but denying the

power of *true* Godliness.... [that is exemplified today as never before] ...But *as for you*, turn away from *all* these.”

Now let’s see what kind of society that this develops. We need to look at the society around us as well. What happens when you have a society like this, you have people who do not control themselves, do not discipline themselves, and they’re going exactly the opposite way of God.

God wants everybody, even in this society, to keep His commandments in the letter of the Law. If they would keep the Ten Commandments in the letter of the Law, there would be a great deal of blessing for all who did. That’s not call to conversion. But when America used to use the Bible as it’s textbook in school, we had a society with a low crime rate. When they kicked God out of school and started developing the society the way that it is ending up now, we gradually moved from a law-abiding society to a lawless society where you have all kinds of sin:

- adultery
- fornication
- murder
- rape
- gambling

Gambling is rampant! Not only do you have home foreclosures that is a problem, but you have so many gambling online—hoping that they’ll hit the jackpot—so they can pay their bills and get out of debt. They say that Gamblers Anonymous is really becoming overwhelmed with people trying to get unhooked from the addiction of gambling. You can do it online; just go on your computer and use a charge card. You start using a charge card and what happens? *Another company says, ‘Here, we’ll give you a charge card!’* So, you get that one, and I heard one addict say on the radio. Then you get another one and borrow against your house, and soon he lost everything.

What he did is run from credit card to credit card to try and get from this one to make the minimum payment on another one. Know for sure, that if the only thing you pay on a credit card is the minimum payment, *you’re in trouble!* This is all reflective of something in the way that this society is becoming, and it multiplies itself.

Here’s the cause; not the only cause, but the main cause; Matthew 24:11: “And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many; and because **lawlessness shall be multiplied...**” (vs 11-12). Lawlessness is described in the Bible this way: ***and every man did that which was right in his own sight!***

When you have lawlessness, then you have

to have more police to enforce the law, because people do not have self-control. They are not taught to obey. They have no respect for anyone else. You take all of those things that we have covered so far and that’s how it is.

“..the love of many shall grow cold” (v 12). This is also amplified in the technological society that we are in, people can be within a crowd but disconnected from anybody. You can see that they’re connected to themselves with their earplugs. Some of them may be listening to someone read the Bible. In that case, that’s good. But the majority of them have blasting mainline satanism through music straight into their brains. A lot of young people now are going permanently deaf because they injure their ears by having these iPods, etc. Their brains are all scrambled.

What you need, since they can’t control themselves and think for themselves the way they ought to, and they’re really controlled by Satan the devil and in no mood to repent of anything, what do you need? *More police!* And the police then have to have more arms. The police today look like Nazi soldiers with their helmets and everything, and they act like it.

Because there’s lawlessness, you also have corrupt police who are criminals themselves. You have corrupt prosecutors who want a number of convictions rather than the truth. So, you have a strange mixture of a society that is really terrible, awful and miserable to try and live in.

So, in this society you can look at the world and everything is against us. Remember this: *God is for us!* So, **how can you be right with God?**

Example of Moses:

God has to intervene with His Spirit. This is why God has to intervene and call each one whom He calls. That’s why it’s so important that you understand that, know that, and through repentance and baptism then you receive the Holy Spirit. God has to call you for that. That’s what you need to really understand.

Only God can rescue this society! Human beings aren’t going to do it. No elected President is going to do it.

Hebrews 11:24: “**By faith Moses**, after becoming a great *leader*, refused to be called *the* son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy *the* temporary pleasure of sin; for he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt because he was looking intently to the reward” (vs 24-26). *It has to be a complete turning!*

Verse 27: “**By faith** he left Egypt... [he didn’t know where he was going; he ended up in Midia] ...not fearing the wrath of the king; for he persevered... [for 40 years; think about how God prepared him for 40 years] ...as *if he were* seeing the *One Who is* invisible. **By faith** he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not slay them” (vs 27-28). Then it talks about what he did there. It is *by faith* that we leave:

- the pleasures of the world
- the pleasures of sin
- the loving of self
- the loving of money

We turn ourselves to God!

Example of Enoch:

Verse 5: “**By faith Enoch** was transported so that he would not look upon death, and was not found because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him that he pleased God.” Here we find that it is possible to *please* God.

Let’s see some other things on how we can please God, because it is possible. First of all, God says that He loves you. If He loves you and has called you, you can please Him.

- you don’t have to have a guilty conscience
- you don’t have to ask what you have to do to please God

The Bible tells you what to do to please God! So, let’s look at some of these things.

I. Have a Contrite and Humble Spirit

This is what God looks to; this is the first thing that pleases God because He’s:

- gracious
- merciful
- kind
- loving

Isaiah 57:15: “For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name is Holy; ‘I dwell in the high and Holy place, even **with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit...** [that comes by repentance and loving God] ...to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

II. Seek the LORD

Another way you can please God, and how God will be with you, watch over you, protect you, place His angels around you, and bless you in the way that He says. Some of your blessings will be trials. And you will have trials so that God will know that what you have said you will do. Isaiah

55:6: “**Seek the LORD** while He may be found...” That’s pleasing to God. Jesus said that all those who ‘seek will find.’ All those who ‘knock it will be opened.’ All those who ‘ask will receive.’

“...call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way...” (vs 6-7). All the things I read about what the wicked are doing, they need to forsake their ways.

“...and the unrighteous man his thoughts...” (v 7). The relationship that we have with God begins with what we’re thinking. What we’ve described already has been the thoughts of:

- loving self
- loving pleasure
- loving money

“...and let him return to the LORD... [repentance] ...and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (v 7) Then He says that they way you begin understanding God is to realize that the way we have thought is not the way that God is.

Verse 8: “‘For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (vs 8-9). ***That’s why we have the Bible!***

We would never know a thing about what God thinks and what God says without the Bible. It’s here! This becomes most important book in the world!

III. Delight in the Sabbath Day and in the Lord

Isaiah 58:13: “If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, *from* doing your own desires on My Holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the Holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, **not doing your own ways, nor pursuing your own desires, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD...**” (vs 13-14). It works both ways:

- you repent
- you change the way you live
- you are baptized
- you receive the Holy Spirit

Now God is dwelling within you! If you delight in the Lord, He’s going to delight in you.

Let’s see how this works:

Psalms 103:17: “But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him...”

- you fear God
- you love God
- you delight in Him

“...and His righteousness is unto children’s children, to those who keep His covenant, and to those who remember His precepts to do them” (vs 17-18). All of these things then add up on how you can please God.

Verse 19: “The LORD has established His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, O you His angels, mighty in strength, who do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word. Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, ministers of His who do His pleasure” (vs 19-21)—do the pleasure of God.

This is what ministers ought to really think about. No minister, teacher or elder—anyone who serves God—is there to please himself.

- He is there to teach the Word of God.
- He is there to equip the people of God with:
 - ✓ knowledge
 - ✓ truth
 - ✓ understanding
 - ✓ faith
 - ✓ confidence

Everything that comes from God!

“...Bless the LORD, all His works in all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!” (v 22). That’s another way that it works.

IV. Prayer

Proverbs 15:8: “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD... [remember Cain; that’s why his wasn’t accepted] ...**but the prayer of the upright is His delight.**” That’s why prayer is so important. That’s why we need to pray everyday.

- we talk with God
- we study everyday
- He talks with us
- the Bible is His words

When you pour your heart out to God in prayer, He delights in that, and if He delights in it, He takes pleasure in it. If He has pleasure in it, then you’re pleasing God.

V. Turn from Evil

Proverbs 16:6: “By mercy and Truth iniquity is purged...” That’s how you overcome sin:

- mercy from God
- truth and recognition of it through repentance
- leaving and forsaking it, as God instructs

purges sin! And we can add: *through the sacrifice of Christ!*

The sins have to be blotted out before God in heaven above. That’s what Christ does. Then the iniquity in the mind has to be purged away with God’s Spirit, and that is done with mercy and Truth. Replace the sinful thoughts with the Truth of the Word of God. That’s how you cleanse your mind. It’s a process called *conversion!* It is a lifelong process.

“...and **by the fear of the LORD men turn away from evil**... [that pleases God when anyone turns from evil] ...**When a man’s ways please the LORD...**” (vs 6-7). Yes, you can please God, because as He looks down on the earth:

- How many are really desiring to keep God’s way?
- How many are really seeking God?
- How many are really loving God?
- How many are really putting the words of God, the Spirit of God—through prayer and study—into their minds?
- *Very few indeed!*

Verse 7: “When a man’s ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

That’s quite a promise! I imagine that every one of you could tell me about an occurrence in your life where things were against you, and maybe you even lost your job and thought this was terrible. But then God provided you with another job, maybe even a better job, and He made you “...to be at peace...” with your enemies.

Proverbs 11:20: “Those who are of a perverse heart *are* an abomination to the LORD... [2-Tim. 3] ...but the upright in the way *are* His delight.”

You can put in there that if God delights in you then He’s pleased with you, He’s happy with you, because you’re doing things the way that God says. That’s really quite a thing.

Proverbs 12:22: “Lying lips *are* an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truly *are* His delight.” I know that many people have thought:

- Does God love me? *Yes, He does!*
- Does God delight in me? *Yes, He does!*
- Can you please the Lord? *Yes, you can!*

But you have to do it *His way!* You can make Him angry if you go the other way.

Let’s see how you can do this even more within your heart and mind. How you can delight in God and then God can delight in you and take

pleasure in you and be pleased with what you do. These are all things that if you delight yourself in, in understanding the Word of God, then God will take pleasure in you, as well.

If you want a very interesting and deep study, go through Psa. 119 verse-by-verse and break it down according to commandments, laws, precepts and testimonies. Think of it this way: I believe that this is not only what David wrote, but very likely a prophecy of how Jesus thought on God's ways.

What did God the Father say of Jesus? *This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased! Also in Whom I delight!* Let's see how we can delight in the Lord.

Psalm 119:47: "And **I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I have loved.**"

All of those who say that they love God and cast away His commandments and His laws, how can they love and please God when they speak with their mouth but do not perform with their actions?

Verse 70: "Their heart is gross like fat, but I delight in Your Law." If we delight in God's Law, which He gave for our good and benefit, then He will delight in us.

(go to the next track)

We will tie this in with the New Testament and see how it all comes. Remember that the most important thing is a repentant heart and a loving attitude of loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being. That's the most important thing. From that you love your neighbor as yourself and from that you love the brethren, and then even your enemy. You understand that enemies do these things because they're minds are blinded and they don't know God, and *they think* that they are doing right.

We build on that, and we can see that, yes, we can please God. That's not forcing our way upon God; that is yielding our ways and our thoughts to God's way.

Verse 77: "Let Your tender mercies come to me so that I may live, for **Your Law is my delight.**" Very similar to the one we read earlier.

You will notice the way that Psa. 119 is laid out. There are 22 sections of 8 verses each, and each section is based upon the Hebrew alphabet beginning with aleph, beyt, gimal and so forth all the way through. Each verse begins with that letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This whole Psalm was to be memorized and sung at the temple by the Levites. It's called *a song of degrees*. So, there are 22 degrees here.

Verse 174: "I have longed for Your salvation... [that's part of the attitude that we have

toward God] ...O LORD, and Your law is my delight."

Let's carry this a little further and see how Psa. 37 is talking about delighting in God. Now it shifts from the laws, commandments and statutes of God to God Himself. It gives us some very good instructions here along the way:

Psalm 37:1: "Do not fret yourself because of evildoers..." In other words, don't be frustrated because of what they're doing.

"...and do not be envious against the workers of iniquity" (v 1)—who appear to be prospering in their evil. Just think of movie/rock stars; they have money and power, but we don't need to be envious of them. Every time you see a filthy rich plutocrat driving by in a Rolls Royce—maybe they lift up their nose as they pass by you—think about what kind of travel vehicle God is going to give you. "...do not be envious..." of them.

Verse 2: "For they shall soon be cut down like the grass; and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land... [and you shall be fed; God will take care of you] ...and cherish faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (vs 2-4). Not the lust, but the desires.

- **if** your desire is to be in the Kingdom of God, which it is
- **if** your desire is to please God, which it is
- **then** God is going to take care of you

Very little of that, however, is going to be in this life!

Remember the parables of the pounds and the talents, at the resurrection what did God say to the one who received five talents? *After he was faithful, God said, 'Well done good and faithful servant, be you over ten cities!'* So, the finality of it is going to come in the resurrection. But we will see blessings as we go along.

Verse 5: "**Commit your way unto the LORD;** trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass.... [in *His* way and in *His* time] ...And He shall bring forth your righteousness like the light... [at the resurrection] ...and your judgment like the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of him who carries out wicked schemes" (vs 5-7).

Verse 11: "But the meek shall inherit the earth... [that's being in the Kingdom of God; nothing can replace that] ...and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." That means how happy and delighted we're going to be when we are spirit being ruling and reigning with Christ.

All the weakness of the flesh and all the

pulls of sin are going to be gone. That's really something to keep in mind.

Verse 22: "For those blessed of Him shall inherit the earth..." When we read in the New Testament about our inheritance, it starts with the earth and it ends up with the universe. That's something!

I've talked about our calling and that God has called the weak of the world, and that's exactly what it is. But here you are in a seminar to learn how to develop Godly character so you can rule under Christ in the Kingdom of God.

- This is a full-time work!
- This is the Lord's business!

The world is out here trying to figure out how to bring their one-world order, God already has His plan working, and He's already training those whom He's going to use.

The world wouldn't pick us, that's for sure! We don't look the part, we don't act the part, we're not the part, so they reject us. But we're going to inherit the earth!

"...and those cursed of Him shall be cut off.... [God will take care of the wicked] ...The steps of a good man are made firm... [established] ...by the LORD, and He delights in his way" (vs 22-23).

Let's always understand that where we began was with a *humble heart and a contrite spirit*. Whenever we are approaching God, this is how we are to live our lives.

1-John 3:11: "For this is the message that you heard from *the* beginning... [from Christ] ...that we should love one another." God is most delighted in when we love Him and love each other. That's when God takes the most pleasure in His saints.

Verse 12: "Not as Cain, *who* was of the wicked *one*, and murdered his own brother. And what was the reason that he murdered him? Because his own works were wicked, but his brother's works were righteous." There's always the comparison.

Verse 13: "My brethren, do not be amazed if the world hates you."

{note sermon: *Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You* (#1 Love series)} Doesn't matter who you are, where you are, what the circumstances are, how much you have suffered, how much you have lost. Regardless of whatever it is, ***God loves you and He has called you!*** That's is the most important thing in life!

Let's see what really pleases God more than anything else. You take all of these aspects that

we've talked about:

- a broken heart
- a contrite spirit
- delighting yourself*
- in the Law of God
- in the commandments of God
- in the way of God

Trusting in Him faithfully for everything! You put it all together with:

- prayer and study
- loving God
- loving the brethren
- loving your neighbor

And put it together with the fellowship we have with God! This is what God wants, that personal fellowship with Him on a daily basis.

1-John 1:3: "That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for ***the fellowship***... [a very emphatic form of fellowship] ...—indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ."

Remember, if Christ is in you, what did God the Father say of Jesus? ***This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased!*** God gets a little frustrated with people who have His Holy Spirit who become lukewarm and dabble in false doctrines and who lose their first love, or who become so lackadaisical that they become nearly dead. But God delights in those who apply themselves and repent. Let's see how this works.

1-John 3:14: "We know that we have passed from death into life... [because we have the Spirit of God, and] ...because we love the brethren. The one who does not love *his* brother is dwelling in death."

- Let's think about that with the Catholic Church and the Inquisition; *it's not of God!*
- Let's think about that in relationship to Islamic fundamentalism and conversion by beheading; *it's not of God!*

They think they're doing the will of God. The god that they're doing will of is not the Father or Jesus Christ; *it's 'the god of this world' Satan the devil!*

Verse 15: "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him."

There are many things that can come along that cause offenses. There are many difficulties that come along that are misunderstandings. But here is a key that is always important for you to remember: ***If you have trouble with someone, or you have something against someone, you go that person individually and work it out!*** That is a very important exercise of the love and mercy of God, and the loving of the brethren.

Matthew 5:22: “But I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother without cause...” Maybe there are times when you can be angry, but go settle it.

It says, ‘Don’t let the sun go down on your wrath’ (Eph. 4), because all you’re going to do is sweat and stew about it all night and never sleep. You work it up in your mind and make it worse.

“...shall be subject to judgment. Now, *you have heard it said*, ‘Whoever shall say to his brother, “Raca,” shall be subject to *the judgment of the council.*’ But *I say to you*, whoever shall say, ‘*You fool,*’ shall be subject to the fire of Gehenna. For this reason...” (vs 22-23).

Lot’s of times we think things about people, we say things about people to other people, and what we’re really doing is judging their heart and mind and thoughts, **and we don’t know them!** Remember that even wives cannot read someone else’s mind, nor your husband’s. Though, through many years of being married, you can make some pretty good guesses. But you really never know.

Verse 23: “For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go *your way*; first be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (vs 23-24). We’ll talk later about what kind of spiritual gifts we’re to offer later.

We are coming before the altar in heaven above, not just on the earth. This becomes an important thing. Always be ready to forgive and to listen. What did Peter ask Jesus? ‘Lord, how often should I forgive my brother? Seven times?’ Peter thought he was being real generous. Jesus said, ‘I say to you, not seven times, but seventy times seven.’ That’s 490!

If you condense that into one day, that would occupy the whole day. But if you spread it out over a lifetime, that’s still a lot! Go settle it first. If you have issue with someone, go settle it. ‘I need to talk with you and please don’t get upset. I have something that I need to get settled out here’ if someone says that to you, be all ears and listen to what they have to say. Don’t be a narcissist and justify everything you have done, when you know you were wrong.

You want God to forgive you your sins, then forgive someone else’s sins. What if you won’t forgive that person’s sins, but that person has repented to God and He’s forgiven them? Where does that put you? Pleasing God is a lot more than saying:

- God, I love Your Law
- God, I delight in it

Which you need to do, and have a humble and contrite spirit and love Him and the brethren, and apply that in the way that you live in your relationship with God and each other.

1-John 3:15: “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him. **By this very act we have known the love of God because He laid down His life for us...**” (vs 15-16). That is the key right there.

I did a sermon *Jesus, Our Hero and Champion*. One of the ways that we keep a humble and contrite heart and spirit is to understand what God has done for us, and to understand what He has called us to. We receive all of that by His love, mercy and grace. Yes, there are things we are to do. Notice how we are to respond:

“...and we ourselves are to lay down *our* lives for the brethren” (v 16). You do that through:

- fellowship
- prayer
- encouragement
- helping them if they have need

John explains it, v 17: “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his feelings of compassion from him, how can the love of God be dwelling in him?”

That’s self-explanatory. Then John makes it even clearer, because God doesn’t want us to have just platitudes of love, or thoughts of love, and no actions of love:

Verse 18: “My little children, we should not love in word, nor with *our* tongues; rather, *we should love* in deed and in Truth.” ***Put your money where your mouth is!***

You receive a benefit from it: they receive a benefit because you love them. You receive a benefit because you love them. God receives a benefit because His Spirit flows and His love flows, and here’s what happens.

Verse 19: “And in this *way* we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him...” You come before God:

- with confidence
- with love
- with faith
- with a repentant heart and attitude

Then your whole relationship or fellowship with God becomes that much greater. It is spiritually motivated by the love of God.

Because we’re human and have the

weakness of the flesh, and we sin—which we do—then we need to repent. What happens when you sin? *God convicts you in your mind!* You condemn yourself! That happens to every one of us. Why does that happen? *Because the Spirit of God is causing us to recognize that!* People in the world don't have that happen to them. Those who have the Spirit of God have that happen to them, because God's Spirit is working with you to open your mind to see that this was wrong and for you to change. But nevertheless, when you sin, you condemn yourself.

Verse 20: "That if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things." That means that when you repent, God will lift you out of it. Sometimes it lingers for a while, but you need to ask God to help you to

- purge it out of your mind
- purge it out of your heart
- purge it out of your thoughts

That's all a part of growing and overcoming, developing the heart, mind and character of God.

Verse 21: "Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us..." we have not sinned, because we can live a good deal of our lives without sinning as we're led by the Holy Spirit of God. What does this do for us?

"...then we have confidence toward God" (v 21)—because your relationship with God is strong, and you're continuing to use that and develop it.

Verse 22: "And whatever we may ask we receive from Him **because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight.**"

Yes, you can please God! But it takes all of these things combined together, which gives us a wonderful combination

Verse 23: "And this is His commandment: that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another, exactly as He gave commandment to us."

Verse 24 ties all of this together: "And **the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him...**" *If* you're keeping the commandments of God and you're dwelling in Christ.

"...and He [Christ] in him... [Christ is dwelling in you] ...and by this we know that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit which He has given to us" (v 34). Here's the strengthening of the spiritual relationship with God.

Think on this for a minute: How repugnant is it in the eyes of God for a minister to stand up and constantly put fear in the hearts of the people of God because of the commands of a minister? *Not very*

good! All that does is breed contention, decent, fear and condemnation. God wants us to get rid of all of these things through the love of God.

1-John 4:9: "In this way the love of God was manifested toward us... [God did it first, then He called us] ...that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this act is **the love**—not that we loved God..." (vs 9-10). In other words, it didn't come from us to God first: *it came from God to us!* God leads us to repentance by His graciousness.

"...rather, that **He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**" (v 10). We have continual mercy and forgiveness daily upon repentance. That's why the daily prayer says, 'forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.' Constant repentance.

Let me tell you what will happen with that. I know a man who had some very treacherous thoughts against his wife, the wife of his youth. We see that happen many times. Older men divorce their wives. It seems to be something that a lot of men do when they get older, they get rid of their wives and they hook up with some young thing and deal treacherously with their wives.

Malachi 2:14: "Yet, you say, 'Why?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously—yet, she *is* your companion and your covenant wife"—which was *until death do you part!*

There was a presidential candidate who was dealing treacherously with his wife, and began to realize it. He repented of that and lo and behold many of his problems began to clear up, because God led him to see that that inner sin, which only he knew, was cutting him off from God. That's why it's important that Christ came first and did what He did. ***He's a propitiation of our sins, so that we can be cleansed from all sin! Cleansed from all unrighteousness!***

1-John 4:11: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another." You can't say out of one side of your mouth, 'Lord, I love You.' Then on the other side of your mouth say, 'I hate that person over there,' who is a brother or sister in Christ. It doesn't work that way. I've already covered how you can handle that problem.

Verse 12: "No one has seen God at any time. *Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us." That's what God wants to do, *perfect the love.*

Verse 13: "By this *standard* we know that we are dwelling in Him, and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to

us.” His own Spirit God has given to us. That’s amazing! And we *know* that!

Verse 14: “And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God” (vs 14-15). *That is if it is in Truth!*

Verse 16: “And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him.” See how all of this works together.

- we can love God
- He can be pleased with us

It’s not that we of ourselves, by ourselves, can please God, but we have His Spirit within us so that:

- we are able to please Him
- we are able to keep His commandments
- we are able to love Him
- we are able to love the brethren

Verse 17: “By this *spiritual indwelling*, **the love of God is perfected within us**, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because even as He is, so also are we in this world.”

Here’s where we come to in our relationship with God, v 18: “There is no fear in the love *of God*; rather, **perfect love casts out fear** because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love *of God*. We love Him because He loved us first. If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?” (vs 18-20).

So, we have come full circle. ***Yes, you can be in right standing with God, and you can please God, by doing the things that He delights in; by being motivated by the Spirit of God to do His will and to do His pleasure.***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2 Timothy 3:1
- 2) 1 Timothy 4:1-3
- 3) 2 Timothy 3:2-5
- 4) Matthew 24:11-12
- 5) Hebrews 11:24-28, 5
- 6) Isaiah 57:15
- 7) Isaiah 55:6-9
- 8) Isaiah 58:13-14
- 9) Psalm 103:17-22
- 10) Proverbs 15:8

- 11) Proverbs 16:6-7
- 12) Proverbs 11:20
- 13) Proverbs 12:22
- 14) Psalm 119:47, 70,77, 174
- 15) Psalm 37:1-7, 11, 22-23
- 16) 1 John 3:11-13
- 17) 1 John 1:3
- 18) 1 John 3:14-15
- 19) Matthew 5:22-24
- 20) 1 John 3:15-24
- 21) 1 John 4:9-10
- 22) Malachi 2:14-15
- 23) 1 John 4:11-20

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Ephesians 4

Also referenced:

Books:

- *A Course in Miracles* by Helen Schucman
- *Seven Steps to Spirituality* by Deepak Chopra

Sermons:

- *Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You* (#1 Love series)
- *Jesus, Our Hero and Champion*

FRC: bo
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