

“If You Love Me Keep My Commandments”

Fred R. Coulter

This topic is somewhat of an expansion on what I covered in the previous article concerning healing. Jesus said, ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments.’ We all know that has to do with the Ten Commandments and the other commandments of God. Let’s look at this in just a little bit different way. Let’s ask ourselves: Are we doing very similar to what we find in Luke 18? It’s important and essential and there’s no way anyone’s going to get in the Kingdom of God without keeping the commandments of God—that’s absolutely true.

We have a situation in Luke 18:18: “And a certain ruler asked Him, saying, ‘Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’.... [After all, that’s why we’re here—isn’t it? We’re all here because we want eternal life.] ...Then Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good except one—God. You know the commandments...” (vs 18-20).

If there is any group that knows the commandments, we know the commandments—don’t we? People always say, ‘He doesn’t mention the Sabbath here.’ He mentions it in other places, so let’s not get all out of sorts.

“...“You shall not commit adultery. You shall not commit murder. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and your mother”” (v 20).

- How many hundreds of million—if not billions—of people in the world keep those commandments in love?
- Have they been called? *No!*
- Are they going to receive eternal life? *Not at the first resurrection!*

Maybe they will be in the second resurrection and be able to have an opportunity for salvation.

Even in the letter of the Law, God expected Israel to keep the first four—didn’t He? *Yes!* There are a lot of people in the world who don’t have the right God; but:

- How many do not have idols and statues? *Lots of them!*
- How many do not take God’s name in vain? *There are a lot of people who don’t swear and curse!*
- How many are out there keeping the Sabbath? *Jews, Seventh Day Adventists, and 400 denominations of the Church of God!*

Someone made the comment, ‘There are as many denominations of the Church of God now as there

are Protestants.’ That’s just the nature of the way things go.

Are we doing like this man here said? Verse 21: “And he said, ‘I have kept all these *commandments* from my youth.” In other words: Boy! Hey! I’m almost there—aren’t I? What he was doing was relying on the things that he had done. How many people can say, ‘I grew up in the Church of God?’ That’s exactly the same thing.

We need to understand something that’s very important and very profound. This is something that Protestants use to say that there’s no need keeping the commandments. Like I told one Protestant recently, ‘Do not accuse us—those who keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days—of trying to seek salvation or justification by commandment-keeping. We understand what the Law is. We understand what the commandments are. *We are to keep them!*’

Galatians 3:21: “*Is* the law then contrary to the promises of God? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** For if a law had been given that had the power to give life... [Commandments and laws do not give life, they define right and wrong. They define good and evil. That’s the function of law.] ...*then* righteousness would indeed have been by law.” So, in keeping the commandments you cannot say, ‘God *must* give me eternal life because I keep the commandments.’ The truth is, God expects everybody in the world to keep the commandments. *He expects us to keep them in a special and a different way!*

Romans 7:6: “But now we have been released from the law... [the penalty of the law—or sin] ...because we have died *to that* in which we were held so that we might serve in newness of the spirit and not in *the* oldness of *the* letter. What then shall we say? *Is* the law sin? **MAY IT NEVER BE!...**” (vs 6-7).

Someone gave me an article that people are now saying that the Bible is ‘hate literature.’ We knew that was coming. This is what Paul was saying here.

“...But I had not known sin, except through the law...” (v 7). That’s what the Law does. It tells you what sin is. It tells you what is the unacceptable behavior. The way that it is listed, it is in such a way that you have to make a choice. That’s why the Ten Commandments are written the way that they are written.

Let's see what Jesus said, Luke 18:22: “And after hearing those things, Jesus said to him, ‘You still lack one thing; sell everything that you have, and distribute to *the* poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come *and* follow Me.’” There is the key. ***That is the spiritual key!*** We'll touch on this a little bit later, which is: You have to give up everything that you have. What has to happen to you individually we'll also cover. He wasn't willing to do that

Verse 23: “But when he heard these things, he became very sorrowful, for he was quite rich.” Here's a man, like so many people, that has *just enough* religion that they're happy with it. They're comfortable with it. They get along with it. They're good, they're law-abiding, they're sincere; but when the real crunch of what comes that is *spiritually required*, which requires a lot of work and effort—as a matter of fact, we're going to see that it requires conversion—they aren't willing to do that.

Verse 24: “Now, when Jesus saw him become so sorrowful, He said, ‘How difficult *it is* for those who have riches to enter into the Kingdom of God! For it is easier *for* a camel to go through an eye of a needle than *for* a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.’ And those who heard *this* said, ‘Who then is able to be saved?’ But He said, ‘The things *that are* impossible with men are possible with God’” (vs 24-27).

That's the important thing. God is doing the impossible with human nature through His Holy Spirit. We know that God hasn't called many rich. We know that God hasn't called many mighty and all of that sort of thing, we know that. One of the main, important things, which is one of the commandments that God and Christ have given is this: ***You shall forgive!***

Luke 17:3: “Watch yourselves; and if your brother commits a sin against you, rebuke him... [yes, you can work the situation out, no problem] ...and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him” (vs 3-4)

Verse 5: “Then the apostles... [since they understood that they had to have faith] ...said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith.’ But the Lord said, ‘If you had faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you might say to this sycamine tree, ‘Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you’” (vs 5-6).

Then He gives another parable, which is very important. This is something that we need to realize. We're going to look at the commandment again, ‘If you love Me keep My commandments.’ Then we're going to look at some of the

commandments in addition to the Ten Commandments.

Verse 7: “But which of you having a servant plowing or shepherding will immediately say *to him* when he comes in from the field, ‘Come and sit down *and eat*’? Rather, will he not say to him, ‘Prepare what I may eat, and gird yourself, *and* serve me while I eat and drink; and afterwards you may eat and drink’?” (vs 7-8).

In today's world of freedom and unions, this seems like a very unreasonable request—doesn't it? The master of the house has been there all day in the house, doing whatever he is going to do. He's had his servant, or slave, out there working in the field. He comes in and tells the servant, ‘Look. You clean yourself up. You get ready and you come and fix me something to eat. When I'm done eating, then you can eat.’ That seems very unreasonable—doesn't it? Notice what He says here:

Verse 9: “Is he thankful to that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.” All of those things were expected. This is where Protestantism just falls right off the end of the cliff. They don't understand that God expects the commandments to be kept. In their self-righteousness, if you corner them and say:

- Should you murder? *No!*
- Should you steal? *No!*
- Should you lie? *No!*
- Should you covet? *No!*

The one thing they are against is the Sabbath commandment and somewhat against idols, because they like to have their little cross. He asks: ‘Does he thank him because he's done the things which were commanded of him?’ He says, ‘I think not.’ ***Those are required!***

Verse 10: “Likewise, you also, when you have done all *the* things that are commanded you, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants, because we have done that which we were **obligated to do.**’”

How do we look at this? They are required! He didn't tell the servant, ‘You shouldn't do those.’ He was making the apostles know that to do the commandments like the rich man was doing was not all that God required. God wants something greater than that. I think there are just too many people in the Church of God who are relying upon commandment-keeping as their ticket to eternal life. Something greater has to happen than commandment-keeping. I would have to say this: If people just rely on commandment-keeping alone—which is all required—and not look at the other commandments that Jesus gave, then I'm afraid that they're doing the bare minimum. Remember: ***No***

law can give you eternal life! Law-keeping is required. Jesus said that it is required!

I’m going to give you the in-depth translation of this Scripture. John 14:15 (KJV): Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” The Greek is such:

(FV): “If you love Me, keep **the commandments**—namely, **My commandments**.” That has a much greater impact and a much greater force—doesn’t it? What are some of the commandments that Jesus has given? How do we do this? God expects us to go above and beyond commandment-keeping. The Protestants say that since no one can keep the commandments, don’t even bother, just rely upon the grace of God and you have it made. So, they enter into the realm of lawlessness. But Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.”

You might do this for a private Bible study: take *A Harmony of the Gospels* and go through and see if you can pick out all the commandments that Jesus gave. He gave many, many more than what I’m going to cover here. This is just going to give you an understanding of what Christ requires for us.

He made it clear in Matthew 5:17: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled” (vs 17-18).

You can read in *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*, Appendix H: *How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets?* It explains it very thoroughly. We have very well established that the Law—we can say the Ten Commandments and all the other laws that are not the ceremonial, ritual, or sacrificial laws—is still in force.

We also have to understand that Jesus was the Creator and Lawgiver in the Old Testament and He’s the One Who gave the Ten Commandments, the statutes, the judgments, and all of those things—wasn’t He? *Yes!*

Verse 19: “Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven...” Now He goes beyond even the Ten Commandments and He’s talking about the least commandments—isn’t He? Every one of us have to ask the question in our minds: In viewing the laws of God—the commandments of God—which ones do we consider—or which *one* do we consider the least? If we ‘teach men so,’ to break them, “...shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.”

“...but whoever shall practice and teach *them*...” (v 19). Christ is leaving it up to the individual choice. You have to make a judgment in your life. Only you know what goes on in you life, in your mind, in your heart and in your relationship to the Word of God, the commandments of God. Jesus makes it very clear:

“...whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven” (v 19). This shows the value of keeping the commandments of God and it also shows that *even though the commandments will not give you eternal life, you’re not going to get it unless you keep them, because you’re not going to be there!*

God the Father\] has something greater for you! He has something better for you! He has the commandments that Jesus gave in addition, how He gave them, and how we are to keep those commandments, which then become **a way of life and a way of thinking**. That’s very important. Many times we have emphasized **a way of life**, which is true, *it is! It has to also be a way of thinking, that’s what’s important!*

Verse 20: “For I say to you, unless your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way *that* you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” That’s a very profound statement—isn’t it?

- Did the Pharisees, outwardly, have the right God? *Yes!*
- Did they have any idols? *No!*
- Were they taking God’s name in vein? *No!*

They didn’t even want to pronounce it, so they wouldn’t want to take it in vein.

- Did they keep the Sabbath? *Yes!*

With a jillion other laws added to it

- Did they keep the Holy Days? *Yes!*
- Did they ever eat unclean meat? *Of course not!*

Like Peter said when the vision came down (Acts 10) he said, ‘Lord, I’ve never eaten anything common or unclean,’ and Peter was not even a Pharisee. *Here’s a Pharisee!*

The Pharisee, trusting in his law-keeping, began to despise other people. *We’re going to see, that is a very key; because he trusted in his exterior law-giving, but he wasn’t changing the interior!* That’s what the Scripture: ‘If you love Me keep My commandments—namely, My commandments,’ Jesus says it has to do with changing the *interior*. You have to come to a point of conversion and understanding to do that which the rich man was just

not able to do. He was just not able to follow through on it.

What He’s getting at in every one of these things, He’s getting to your attitude of what you’re thinking in your mind, regardless of what is on the outside. *That’s what Christ is getting to!*

In Matthew 23 is the Pharisee who prayed and despised everybody. Here’s Jesus saying, ‘Unless your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you’re not going to enter into the Kingdom of God,’ because you have to have that righteousness that comes from God alone. Christ shows how that is done. That also involves:

- conversion
- God’s Spirit
- a lot of effort
- a total change within
- a total change of thought

Here’s the whole key in it! Scribes and Pharisees were righteous on the outside. So righteous that they had all kinds of other rules and regulations to make them more righteous—right? *Yes!*

Matthew 23:25: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!...” Hypocrite means *sanctimonious pretenders*. That’s actually what they called actors, *hypocrites*. In *A Harmony of the Gospels*, I translated it with the paraphrase translation: ‘sanctimonious pretenders.’ Why were they hypocrites? Why were they sanctimonious pretenders? Remember, even Peter got caught up in hypocritical actions (Gal. 2). He had to repent, too. *Yes, he did!*

“...For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but within you are full of extortion and excess”—or whatever it may be—

- within, you’re full of hatred
- within, your full of contempt
- within, you judge and criticize others

—but outside, you’re just like a Pharisee: nice and clean, fine, friendly, good, up-lifting, and all that sort of thing. We’ve often wondered down through the years:

- Lot of people came to church—didn’t they?
- Lot of them attended church over the years—didn’t they?
- They seemed like right, nice, fine people—didn’t they?

Yes! They seemed like they were really convinced of what they were doing. They appeared on the surface to be converted, but, lo and behold, over a period of time, guess what?

Someone gave me a report and said that child molestation is not restricted to Catholic priests, and they appear clean, good, authoritative, and all this. *No!* Try the Jehovah Witnesses! There was a whole report of a man who had been indicted on hundreds of counts of child molestation. On the outside: fine father, dedicated church man, deacon, elder—the whole thing. Everybody thought, ‘Whoa! This is a nice guy!’ Then what happened? *Same thing as the Pharisees!*

Verse 26: “Blind Pharisees! First cleanse the inside of the cup and the dish...”

- **Change the inside!**
- **Change the heart!**
- **Be converted!**

Keeping the commandments of God does not give you license to break the commandments of Jesus Christ and to do the things that He says *not to do*. This is very important to understand.

Just like with the Pharisees, Christ was dealing with them. For Him to expose this—guess what? *They didn’t like that!* They thought He was picking on them; ‘you’re sanctimonious in bringing this out.’ *No!*

“...First cleanse the inside of the cup and the dish, so that the outside may also become clean” (v 26). God judges the heart. God doesn’t judge the exterior. God judges not only our actions of what we do, but He also judges what we think. That’s important! We covered that during the Days of Unleavened Bread—**‘to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ’**—that’s true!

Verse 27: “Woe to you, scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites!.... [sanctimonious pretenders] ...For you are like whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful *on the* outside, but within are full of the bones of the dead, and of all uncleanness. Likewise, you also outwardly appear to men *to be* righteous, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (vs 27-28). Christ is interested with what’s within.

Let’s see what is naturally within our human nature *that seems right, that seems good, that seems natural*. That’s why the Words of Christ cut deep.

Mark 7:21_[transcriber’s correction]: “For from within, out of the hearts of men, go forth evil thoughts...” That’s all manifest in the way that we think, do, speak and act. Today when we have so many things:

- television
- e-mail
- Internet
- printing
- radio

- music
- CDs

and on and on and on. It is magnified millions of times greater than what Christ was talking about here. This means that our inward battle is even greater today than it was during Jesus’ time.

Evil thoughts generally are right to the individual who is thinking them. God made man and woman in such a way, that everything we think and do we justify in our own minds as right. It might even seem right. Was it not right for them to kill Christ, in their own eyes? Was it not a clever thing to not get caught ‘red handed’ themselves, but let the Romans do it? That way we can say we didn’t do it. You can take this thing—evil thoughts—and you can expand that out and out and cover many different things. **Basically, the carnal mind is evil!** Scripture says ‘its desperately wicked and deceitful above all things.’ Of course, then, it’s going to justify that, ‘What I’m doing is right, because *I have cause*’.

“...adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness” (vs 21-22). In writing commentary, I’ve been using some sections from *Langer’s Encyclopedia of World History*. I tell you what, the whole summary of world history is right there in vs 21 and 22. *There it is!* You can go back and verify that—going clear back to Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and on up through the days of Noah—that **‘men’s thoughts were only evil and wicked, continuously.’** That’s the whole history of human endeavor and it also is an indictment on the way that we think.

Verse 23: “**All these evils go forth from within, and these defile a man.**” Let each of us put our name right there. Are these not the things that defile us? *Yes, they are!* **This is the source and basis of why we need to be converted and why there is a struggle to overcoming this! It is a very part of our nature and we need to have that changed!** We’ll see that that is what conversion is all about.

Likewise, Jesus addresses the same problems in Matt. 5 that He was addressing in Mark 7:21-23. He shows the solution. He also shows the effort and the difficulty in doing it.

Matthew 5:27: “You have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you... [Not only does He give a higher standard but He gives a very difficult proposition indeed—doesn’t he?] ...everyone who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (vs 27-28). This is especially true for those who have been adulterers and adulteresses, because their minds

have been so wrapped up in that activity. It is a really difficult problem for them to overcome, very difficult indeed.

Christ knows it’s difficult. This is something that He requires. This is a commandment of Jesus: ‘*If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.*’ Is this not one of His commandments? *Yes, it is!* Is this beyond just the letter of the law—adultery? *Yes, it is!* There are millions of people in the world who keep the letter of the Law. Some of them do not even have the Scriptures of God. So, He shows how difficult it is.

Verse 29: “So then, if your right eye shall cause you to offend, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is better for you that one of your members should perish than *that* your whole body be cast into Gehenna.” You have to make the effort. Of course, the truth is, without God’s Spirit, even cutting off your right hand or taking out your right eye is not going to stop the lust; because that’s within—that’s within the mind. **The solution is going to be conversion!** What we have to understand is that this is a commandment of Jesus Christ: ‘*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*’

Then, He says the same thing of the right hand, v 30: “And if your right hand shall cause you to offend, cut it off and cast it from you, for it is better for you that one of your members should perish than *that* your whole body be cast into Gehenna. It was also said *in ancient times*, ‘Whoever shall divorce his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement’” (vs 30-31). Today, all we have to do is just go file a ‘no fault’ thing for \$75 and it’s over. It’s even easier today than back then. That avoids the whole problem. *When two are married, they are to become one flesh!* So, He gives the only cause for divorce.

Verse 32: “But I say to you... [Is that a command of Christ? *Yes, it is!* Is this the voice of God? *Yes, it is!*] ...whoever shall divorce his wife, except for the cause of sexual immorality...” Today there’s so much of it that it is rampant. The reason this is the cause for divorce is because it breaks the marriage bond of becoming *one flesh*. We could put it as it says in the Old Testament: ‘Strange flesh has entered in.’ That’s not only adultery but it includes all kinds of sexual activities, which we don’t need to name here, you’re very well aware of all of those. That’s a cause of divorce. The only other one we find in 1-Cor. 7 in which Paul said that what he wrote was the commandment of the Lord: ‘If there is a non-believer who adamantly refuses to stay in the marriage, then one who is the believer is no longer bound in that marriage.’ **Those are the only two causes for divorce,** but that is a command of Christ:

“...I say to you...” He also says the same thing in v 33 about swearing.

Verse 34: “But I say to you, do not swear at all... [here in America, you can ‘affirm’ if you’re called to court] ...neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne.” The reason that He said this is because: How many people have sworn to ‘tell the truth, the whole, truth, and nothing but the truth’ even with their hand on the Bible—right or left hand makes no difference—and immediately stand up and lie? *and* Are justified in doing so because ‘my attorney told me to’? If you swear by:

- heaven
- God’s throne
- the earth
- Jerusalem
- your head
- your hair
- your mother or father
- your mother’s or father’s grave

The Mafia swear to each other over ‘my mother’s grave,’ and then turn around and kill each other. Those things are meaningless because the heart hasn’t changed.

Verse 37: “But let your word be *good*, your ‘Yes’ *be* yes *and* your ‘No’ *be* no; for anything that is added to these is from the evil one”—or out of the evil of the mind, or out of the evil of our own nature

Right here, in the very first part of the Gospel, we’re finding that *the requirements for eternal life are far, far more than just commandment-keeping; far more than an exterior way of life, but an interior change of the mind and the heart to overcome the evil!* That has a lot to do with healing and health.

Verse 38: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’” Boy! That’s what they’re doing over here in Modesto with this Scott Peterson! He may have done it. He may not have done it. They even had people right down there around the courthouse ready, and if the lynch laws were still available, they would have taken him out and lynched him. That seems right and good—doesn’t it? *Yes, it does!* The way that it is in the society, that’s the way it works—isn’t it? If you want to know the ultimate extreme of this kind of thing, look at any of the Islamic nations with their hateful religion. *It is a bloody, death-dealing religion, hands down!* Has all of the retaliation, and retaliation against the retaliation times 50 years changed one Jew or one Palestinian? There’s been:

- a lot that have suffered
- a lot of sadness
- a lot of ruined lives

- losses of father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife
 - ✓ blown apart
 - ✓ killed
 - ✓ shot
 - ✓ hacked

What does it solve? That’s why Christ has to return to the earth. Christ gives us a little different way.

Verse 39: “But I say to you, do not resist evil...” Don’t get out there in the middle and fight it. If it comes upon you, then ‘a soft answer turns away wrath.’

(go to the next track)

“...rather, *if* anyone shall strike you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And *if* anyone shall sue you before the law and take your garment, give him *your* coat also” (vs 39-40). In other words, settle the issue before you go to court, if at all possible. Sometimes we can’t do that; but, if at all possible, settle it before you go to court. What happens? I’ve seen it so many times, the lawyers get hold of it, they string it out, they just use up all the money, make the people broke, and all this sort of thing.

Verse 41: “And *if* anyone shall compel you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to the one who asks of you; and do not turn away from the one who wishes to borrow from you.... [those that need help, *you help*] ...You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies...” (vs 41-44)

That’s a high, hard standard—isn’t it? *Yes, it is!* The reason being is that *vengeance belongs to God*. He will take care of it.

What happens when you love your enemy? *Who knows, they may be converted!* It’s even reported that it’s very possible that the jailer and his family—the jailer who was taking care of William Tyndale in Vilvorde Prison—were converted because of William Tyndale’s conduct. That’s what God is interested in. This is difficult: ‘Love your enemies.’ The world has its wars, it’s battles, and it’s fights. Let them do the fighting, if there’s something to be done. That’s what they are there for.

“...bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you” (v 44). That is hard to do. Why does God want us to do that? *Because it clears our minds of hatred, bitterness, strife, and murder, and all of those things*—wishing evil on someone! You’re always going to have someone come along that’s going to be in this category. *You pray for them! Maybe they’ll repent! Maybe they’ll change!* If they don’t, continue to pray

for them and stay away from them. I’ve experienced all of that.

I can look back on those I looked at as enemies and I feel sorry for them, and I have prayed for them. I’ve prayed for them many different ways. ‘God, You take care of them. God, they’re in Your hands.’ I’ve also had to fight through the hatred of it, because it is. What does that do to your life? *It messes you up!* It’s not that you are doing this for the sake of the enemy alone. ***Christ is having you do this for your own sake!*** That’s why!

For example: What are we going to do about the problems and difficulties that we find that are in the world concerning government and the way the world is going, commonly known as *a conspiracy*? To be angry? To be upset about it?

- What is it going to do?
- Is it going to change them? *No!*
- Is it going change their goal? *No!*
- Is it going to make them converted at this particular time? *No!*
- What is it doing to you as an individual?

I know a lot of these things that go on. I’ve read about them. I understand them, but I don’t dwell on them. Why? *Because I better have my mind and my heart on what Christ wants me to do*, that’s why! Then we also need to understand.

Verse 45: “So that you yourselves may be the children of your Father Who *is* in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

God doesn’t look down and all of a sudden say, ‘I’m going to blot out the sun today because this city has been evil.’ Remember what Abraham did when God said He was going to destroy Sodom. He said He would spare it for ten people—five people. He also said He would spare Jerusalem in the days of Jeremiah if there was one man. This gives us a greater understanding of how God looks at things.

Let’s understand this: Who has the final judgment on this? *God does!* Is His judgment better than ours? *Yes!*

Let’s use an obtuse example here: What if the church members who were persecuted by Saul, said, ‘This guy is really ruining the Church. Let’s set a trap for him and get rid of him.’ They suffered persecution, many were killed, but they left it in God’s hands. What did God do? He called him—didn’t He? ***God’s judgment is best!*** Likewise, if you have a great problem or difficult problem with a neighbor or an enemy, put it in God’s hands. Let God help, intervene; ask Him to work His judgment, His blessing, or whatever His determination is. Leave it in His hands and then you have ***peace of***

mind so that Christ can work in your mind! That’s the whole purpose of all this!

Verse 46: “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*?” (vs 46-47). This is evidenced in all of the associations, clubs and different things that people have. They’ve got clubs for everything. They all like their own and love their own.

The same way in sports; you have a sports team, you love this team, and hate the other team. That’s all part of carnality. If you’re a fan of this club, then you salute them. If they’re wearing their logo on their shirt, or they have their logo on the back of their car, or up on the windshield of their motorcycle, you toot the horn, and go: Rah! Rah! Rah! everything’s great. Even down to motorcycle riding, there’s a saying among Harley riders: ‘If you don’t ride a ‘Hog’ then you’re riding a pig.’ It’s the same thing.

Look at it this way: Here’s a man who owns a Rolls Royce and he’s justified that he’s got the best car around—‘I got enough money to do it. All these other poor slobs they can’t buy.’ Here comes a guy in this little old ‘pip squeak’ car. One of these little economy cars, and he says in his mind, looking at the Rolls Royce, ‘Look at that guy over there. Boy! I’m glad I got this it’s cheap on gas and this is a good car.’ *All of those things are nothing more than carnal comparisons to justify your self, and are sin!* That is just the way that we as human beings think.

This is the whole purpose of conversion, v 48: **“Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.”** That’s a tough duty. In other words, Christ is telling us very clearly that ***the process of conversion***, and changing our hearts and minds through the power of the Holy Spirit, ***is a life-time thing***, taken on day-by-day, hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute. That way we don’t have things welling up in us that would cut us off from God, because they do. That’s why He gave that.

Matthew 6:22: “The light of the body is the eye....” As a matter of fact you can tell an awful lot about the health of a person just by looking into the eyes. But He’s talking *spiritually* here.

Here is a very, very good Scripture that ties into it. I’ll be talking a little bit more about this later on concerning the spirit of man, the Holy Spirit, conversion and so forth.

Proverbs 20:27: “The spirit of man *is* the lamp of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.” In other words, all the inward parts of the heart and the mind.

That’s what He’s referring to in Matthew 6:22: “The light of the body is the eye. Therefore, if your eye be sound, your whole body shall be *full of light*.” That’s referring to being single-minded in God’s ways.

Verse 23: “But if your eye be evil, your whole body shall be *full of darkness*...” How is the eye evil? It’s because of the evil in the mind that we read of there in Mark 7; that’s simple. Have you ever seen a picture of someone, or a movie, or even met someone that you knew when you looked at that person, you were looking in evil eyes? That’s even discernable.

“...Therefore, if the light that *is* in you be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!” (v 23). Of course, who’s the author of darkness? *Satan, the devil!* The ultimate of this darkness mentioned would be those who are Satan worshippers. That would be the ultimate of it. *Yes, indeed!*

This is the key, v 24: “No one is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to *the* one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and mammon.**” Let’s put this also in other terms. *You cannot serve two masters by being double-minded!* What do I mean by that? You cannot serve God and serve yourself. You cannot claim God by exteriorly keeping His commandments, like the man who wanted eternal life, but wasn’t willing to go the rest of the way.

Let’s see something that affects a lot of people who are within the Church of God. They haven’t realized that you can’t serve God and self. You can’t say, ‘God, I want this much of You, but I’m reserving this for me. I’ve got to have my carnal nature that I want to retain, but I still want you, God! I don’t want to love my neighbor, don’t want to love my enemies. I want to judge and condemn everyone else, but I want You! *That won’t happen! No!*’

James 1:8: “*He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” What happened? That goes back and ties in with faith and prayer and everything.

It says here, very interestingly, v 7: “Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (vs 7-8). That’s why Christ said you have to be single-minded; you have to be single-hearted. You love God. You take those commandments of Christ, and you let those with the power of the Holy Spirit **change you.**

- Don’t you want to get rid of human nature?
- Don’t you want to overcome the faults, difficulties, and problems that you have as an individual?
- *Sure!*

As we’ll see, that only comes about with repentance and yielding to God. I think part of it is not really understanding that Christ really means what He says. ***He really means these things!***

‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ but not this neighbor. In doing that, you’re serving two masters—trying to serve God and serving self. You become double-minded and what happens? *Inwardly, you’re a hypocrite*—aren’t you? That’s not the thing of overcoming sin or trying to fight sin. ‘You cannot serve God and mammon,’ or you can put anything else you want there: money, position, power, lust, adultery, thievery, lying, any of those things. That’s why we have to repent of them when they come along. We have human nature and it does come along—right?

Matthew 6:25: “Because of this **I say to you**... [Here’s a command of Christ. You might go through Matt. 5, 6 and 7, and look at all of the places where Jesus says, ‘*I say to you.*’ If we do, understand that’s a command of Christ.] ...do not be anxious about your life... [because you’re totally dependant upon Christ] ...*as to* what you shall eat and what you shall drink; not about your body *as to* what you shall wear. Is not life more than food, and the body *more* than clothing?” *Yes, indeed!*

You don’t have to be anxious about it. You don’t have to worry about it. In other words, anything above that we shouldn’t be worried about. In worrying, what has worry ever changed? Don’t shake you head that it didn’t change anything. Yeah, it did! *It changes the one who worries!* There’s a time to be concerned. The difference between worry and concern is this: If you see something where there is a problem, there is a concern, and it’s something that you can do and change, then do it. But if you’re worrying about someone else—their life, their behavior and their things—you can only worry so much and so long. Whoever you’re worrying about, that individual has to make the choices they need to make. You’re better off praying about it. Put it in God’s hands and let God work it out. All the worry in the world will never, ***never***, change a thing, except you. Those things cut you off from God. He reassures you that it’s so simple, He wants you to understand how simple that it is.

Verse 26: “Observe the birds of heaven: they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor do they gather into granaries; and your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they?”

- If God loves you, is He not going to take care of you? *Yes, indeed!*
- If you love God and you pray in faith, will He not hear your prayers? *Yes, He will!* He'll hear your prayers.
- When it involves someone else who has their own choice involved in it, can you live their lives for them? *No, you cannot!*
- Can you change them? *No, you cannot!*

Maybe if it's someone close to you, you can advise them; but they still have to choose—don't they? *Yes, they do!*

Verse 27: “But who among you, by taking careful thought, is able to add one cubit to his stature? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe the lilies of the field, how they grow: They do not labor nor do they spin; but I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these” (vs 27-29). All the worry in the world isn't going to solve a thing, isn't going to change a thing.

Verse 30: “Now if God so arrays the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, *shall* He not much rather clothe you, O you of little faith?” What He's saying here, very clearly, if you worry and have anxiety beyond just concern, then what is that? *That's little faith*—right? Doesn't say you don't have any, just that you have a little. ***Put it all in God's hands! Lay it before Him!***

Verse 31: “Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we be clothed?’ For the nations seek after all these things and your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things” (vs 31-32). Let's stop and ask this: Does God know that you have need of all of these other things, too? *Yes, indeed!* Does God not know of the whole situation that:

- you are confronted with
- you are tormented about
- you are worried about
- you are anxious about

Yes, He does!

If you know there's an enemy out there, does God also know there's an enemy out there? I'll just have to say, God has fought off all our enemies. They've been able to do some things to us down through the years, that is true, but God has fought them off. Where are they today? *It would take me too long to tell you!* What has happened to them in their lives, in their anger, hostility, and bitterness? What's happened to them? Where are they? I hope they repent. Even to this day, I hope they repent. God knows you have need of all those things. He

tells you the primary, important thing to do day-by-day.

Verse 33: “But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God... [That's what we're to do. ***That's the primary thing in our lives!*** The Kingdom of God has to do with keeping the commandments of Christ: ‘*If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.*’] ...and His righteousness...”

- which comes through Christ and repentance
- which comes through study and prayer
- which comes through having, literally, the ‘washing of water by the Word’.

That's why study is so important. If we don't put in the Word of God to cleanse our minds, to cleanse our hearts, coupled with prayer, then we end up being like the rich man and just trust in the outward things that we do.

“...and all these things shall be added to you.” (v 33). God will take care of it in time. He will do it in His way. If there's an extended period of trials and difficulties you're going through, *lay it before God!* Don't come and accuse God, get mad at God. Maybe the things that we get mad at God and accuse God of doing, God's not responsible for; God hasn't done it. In many cases it's our own attitude, ideas, thoughts, and difficulties, and we're just letting carnality rule. ***We know for sure that if we let carnality rule, Christ isn't going to rule in you!*** Will He let you do that? *Of course He will!* We have to choose.

Verse 34: “Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow...”—or the next day. We have to have the right kind of concern for it, but don't be anxious over it. You're not going to make the sun rise any quicker tomorrow, or make it set any quicker tomorrow. God is the One Who has created the time. God will also be able to take care of you.

“...for tomorrow shall take care of *the things* of itself....” (v 34). There are many things that you don't know what you're going to do until tomorrow comes.

I know I've done this, especially in writing, especially referring back to the one I just did on *What Do You Mean, Born Again?* I was going to sit down and I was going to whip that out in about three or four days, I figured for sure. I started approaching it from the way we've always approached it—and guess what? That's not the way that it was. I had to rewrite and change it, then rewrite; and low and behold, I got more information, added that to it and rewrite it and change it. I've probably rewritten and

changed that one particular commentary more than anything else I have written in a long, long time.

Why? Because my mind was set to do it one way, but it had to be done a different way. God just put the road blocks there until He got my attention. Look what came out of it. I’m happy about that. Whatever comes for tomorrow, it’ll take care of itself.

- *if you’re praying about it first*
- *if you’re looking to God to intervene*
- *if your asking God for help, guidance and understanding*

God will be there!

- ✓ He’ll open the door
- ✓ He’ll open the way
- ✓ He’ll provide the way for you

and it will be done!

Sometimes we have to come to the point of total and complete—which we all have to many, many times—surrender and yieldedness to God and His Word.

- You can’t be asking God to help you and bless you if you’re fighting God.
- You can’t be asking God to help you and bless you if you are double-minded

—*not going to happen!* That’s why it’s so important. The commandments that Christ has given are those commandments that deal with the conversion of the mind, the attitude and the heart, which can only come from the Spirit of God. The carnal-minded are impossible to do, but ***with the Spirit of God, they are possible to do.*** That’s just the way that we have to look at it.

Matthew 7:1: “Do not condemn *others...*” This means *judging unto condemnation* in your mind. We have to make righteous judgment. I did a whole series on that. Matter of fact, I have a sermon series and booklet on it.

“...so that you yourself will not be condemned; for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged...” (vs 1-2). We need to think about that. Jesus said, ‘Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.’ You can put it the other way around: *cursed are the unmerciful for they shall not receive any mercy.* That’s just the way it works.

This is one of the biggest faults that all human beings do, every one of us. Let’s be honest, it’s true—isn’t it? *Yes!* The way that human nature makes itself feel good is to look at someone else and judge and criticize that person, to put them down so that you feel better! Isn’t that what happens? I’ve done it, you’ve done it; everybody does it. Next time you find yourself in the middle of doing that, ask yourself this: Do I want this same kind of judgment

that I’m now rattling around in my brain? *No!* You don’t want that. Again, put them in God’s hands. Don’t judge to criticize. That also ties in with other things that we’ll talk about a little later on.

It generally works this way, v 3_[transcriber’s correction]: “Now why do you look at the sliver that *is* in your brother’s eye...” Isn’t it something how we get fixated on little things and get them blown out of proportion? Oh, I’ve done that! Sometimes you feel so right about it, that you just ride that thing down and just grind it into the ground—don’t you? Until there’s absolutely nothing left of it and you? Right in the middle of doing it, at that point, if someone says, ‘Hey, you’re wrong.’ you just explode! You don’t want to admit that. *No!* I’ve done that; you’ve done that. What Christ is giving us is the layout on how we grow and change and overcome. He says, “... look at that sliver...”

“...but you do not perceive the beam in your own eye?” (vs 3). What is the ‘beam in your own eye’? *Your hypercriticism and judgment of that individual for the little problem!* Your hypercriticism and judgment is a great, huge beam in your own eye, which the other person cannot see, but God knows. ***The ‘spirit in man is the lamp of the Lord.’ God knows!***

Verse 4: “Or how will you say to your brother, ‘Allow *me* to remove the sliver from your eye’; and behold, the beam *is* in your own eye?” We had a classic case of that, just here recently on the news: William Bennett, who wrote the book on the seven virtues—didn’t he? He lost millions and millions gambling—didn’t he? He was held up as righteous and he would condemn everybody else. Did God expose him and judge him? *Maybe God didn’t do it directly with His hand, but you know that God had to have His hand in it somewhere for that to come out!*

That’s just a classic example. He was telling everyone how to live their lives, run their politics, run the nation, how to be virtuous and righteous, and here he was going to Los Vegas and gambling millions and millions of dollars. You should have heard the justification that was given by all of the media friends: ‘Well, we ought to not look down on him,’ and all this sort of thing. All we do is just say, ‘Uncle Bill, you’re in God’s hands. May you repent, may this be a lesson for everybody.’ ***Human nature is hypocritical!*** That’s the way that it is. That’s what Christ is saying here.

Verse 5: “*You hypocrite, first cast out the beam from you own eye...*” In other words, go to God; get your life squared around. Let God do the beam-pulling. Just like a logjam on a river, get it out.

“...and then you shall see clearly to remove the sliver from your brother’s eye” (v 5). What we’ve covered here today are those commandments that Jesus said, ‘*You have heard it said of old.*’ He then quotes the commandments in the letter—correct? *Yes!* Then He says, ‘*I say to you...*’

The reason He says it is because ***He wants the change here in the mind and in the heart! He wants us to become ‘perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect’!*** Boy, has He started out with an imperfect thing to work with—and that’s us!

All Scriptures are from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1). Luke 18:18-21
- 2). Galatians 3:21
- 3). Romans 7:6-7
- 4). Luke 18:22-27
- 5). Luke 17:3-10
- 6). John 14:15
- 7). Matthew 5:17-20
- 8). Matthew 23:25-28
- 9). Mark 7:21-23
- 10). Matthew 5:27-32, 34, 37-48
- 11). Matthew 6:22
- 12). Proverbs 20:27
- 13). Matthew 6:22-24
- 14). James 1:8, 7-8
- 15). Matthew 6:25-34
- 16). Matthew 7:1-5

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 10
- Galatians 2
- 1-Corinthians 7
- Matthew 5:33

Also referenced:

Books:

- *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter
- Encyclopedia of World History (Langer’s)

Commentary from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*:

- Appendix H: *How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets?*
- Appendix P: *What Does It Mean to be “Born Again?”*

Sermon Series/Booklet:

- *Judge Righteous Judgment* by Fred R. Coulter