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Immorality Versus Christianity

By Ordell Heavin

That our world is sliding down a path of immorality is beyond question. Values in regard to purity, personal integrity, and basic honesty are rapidly becoming virtues of the past. Rapidly growing crime rates have been making the papers for years. The softening of regulations for television programs has brought profanity and near nudity into every home in the country. Many movie producers seem to be competing in producing films of violence, sexual exploitation and perversion.

Movie-goers often find themselves pulling for the adulterer, the thief, or the murderer, while wishing the worst for law enforcement officers. One wonders how much further the world can go in these directions without resulting in chaos. One also wonders to what extent the longsuffering of God can continue to give men opportunities to repent. The lack of sense of personal responsibility for wrong doing is prevalent in every avenue of immorality. Accurate terms of sins have been softened to less offensive words. A murderer is no longer a sinner, he is an unfortunate victim of circumstances. Drunkards are alcoholics, victims of disease. Unfaithful companions are no longer adulterous. Pornographic movies no longer exist; they have become acceptable "works of art." Immodest apparel has left its former state of shame to become the fashion of dress. Sin has become a forgotten word. The problem of people softening sin into little mistakes and then placing the blame upon someone else is an ancient one.

When Adam was confronted with the first sin that Eve committed, he committed the same one, then tried to blame Eve and then God for giving her to him. Eve in turn shifted the blame to the serpent (Gen. 3:9-13). No one wants to be held accountable for sin. However men will be held accountable whether they choose to face reality or not. Paul's statement in Romans 14:12 ought to sound forth throughout the world, "Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." In God's eyes we are responsible for our own actions.

In a world that scoffs at sin the church must remain pure and clean. Christians have entered into a new relationship with God, having become children in the Lord (Eph. 5:8). As such

we are to "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). Often one can stay in darkness until the eyes adjust and become accustomed to the lack of light. That is exactly the danger the church is facing. Are we becoming accustomed to darkness? Could it be that the attitudes of the church have gradually conformed to those of the world? To avoid these dangers, three suggestions are made:

First, we must make people feel responsible for their own actions. The man whose sins are smothered over and explained away will feel as if he could not help his actions. The Bible teaches that God will not allow us to be tempted above our ability to withstand. It further teaches God will provide an escape (1 Cor. 10:13).

Second, we must cultivate within people the hatred for sin. Amos instructed the Israelites to "Hate the evil, and love the good" (Amos 5:15). Paul urged the Romans to "Abhor that which is evil" (Rom. 12:9). Jesus himself was filled with righteous indignation at those who had made the temple of God a house of merchandise (John 2:13-17). With this hatred of sin a warfare must be waged on the forces of evil. We are to be "Mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (2 Cor. 10:4). We are to demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself against the knowledge of God. With the proper attitudes toward sin and error, and an intense love for the truth, the church will keep pure from the threats of immorality.

Third, the church must insist on calling sins as they are. Some have been crying, "Peace, peace, where there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). What the Bible calls sin, must be designated as sin. Only by awakening within people a sensitivity to sin can we hope to help them see the need for the cleansing power of the blood of Christ.

Having obeyed the gospel of Christ, sin should have no more dominion over us (Rom. 6:14). Having been freed from the yoke of sin, one becomes a servant of Christ (Rom. 6:16). As the church exists in an immoral world, there are several things it must seek to do:

GIVING

By Richard England

Giving of what one possesses has always been an important part of the life of God's people. It also has been the test of faith and sincerity which many have failed to pass. In Matthew 19:16-22 an apparently dedicated and morally good man, who had accumulated much of the world's goods, was instructed of the Lord to sell all that he had, and give it to the poor, and then to follow Jesus. The man went away "sorrowful." He was unwilling to part with his material things in order to obtain eternal life. Such is the case of many people. Although willing to abide by many of the commandments, live a good moral life, and be an honour to one's parents, some will not part with their money, even for Christ. James says "rust" of the silver and gold will be a witness against those who have obtained it by dishonesty, and kept it for their own personal pleasure (James 5:1-6). Jesus says that those who trust in uncertain riches can hardly (meaning they can't) enter into the kingdom (Mark 10:24). Paul wrote: "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. 6:9). Notice here, it is those "That will be rich," not necessarily those who are, but those who have longings for wealth of the world. Paul immediately follows this with "The love of money is the root of all evil." One may be guilty of this sin even though he is a pauper.

When one becomes willing to give of that which he has, to whom shall he give? To the one who is in need (Eph. 4:28). To the man that asks for assistance (Luke 6:30). To those who teach the gospel (Gal. 6:6). To a treasury for work that is common to others of the Lord's people (1 Cor. 16:1-2). To as many as we have opportunity to help (Gal. 6:10). In fulfilling these obligations, it can be said that we are giving to the Lord himself (Matt. 25:40).

For the man who is willing to give and comes into contact with an opportunity, the next question would be: how much should one give? Contrary to the opinion of many religious leaders today, the Bible

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EDITORS: Erwin Cowen and Harold Turner

Is Bible School Important?

Once a man remarked to Samuel Coleridge, "I will not teach my child anything about religion. I will let him grow up, and when he is old enough to judge for himself, he can choose for himself."

As the two men walked together they paused in Mr. Coleridge's garden. "I thought I wanted to set out some strawberry plants here this spring," said Mr. Coleridge, "but you have given me an idea. I think I will wait until next August. Then I will see whether it would rather have weeds in it."

"But, Mr. Coleridge, the weeds will take over the place by then!" replied the man quickly.

To this Mr. Coleridge replied, "My friend, the weeds will also grow unbidden in the heart of your child."

The Lord places a great deal of responsibility upon the parent. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Parents must nourish their children in the fear and discipline of the Lord, "And if any provide not for his own, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. 5:8).

The supreme tragedy of our time is that too many parents make no effort to influence their children in truth and righteousness. You may rest assured that the liquor and the movie industry will seek to influence them. The time is here when each of us must take this responsibility seriously.

Bring your child to Bible school and stay with them for worship.

More crying babies in our nursery will mean fewer crying parents at the judgment day.

GIVING (Cont.)

does not teach us that we are to give a tenth of our income, and beyond that we have no obligation. We are not under the law of the tithe, which is a part of the old will or testament. We are under a new will or testament of Jesus Christ. Under the new law, giving is governed by the attitude of the heart. 1 Timothy 6:18 charges the rich to be ready and willing to fill a need when it arises. We are not to give "grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). The more we prosper the more we should give (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Our giving should be according to plans we make ahead of time, or as Paul put it, as one "purposeth in his heart." The blessings we receive from giving are proportionate to our liberality (2 Cor. 9:6). Liberality is measured by willingness and self sacrifice rather than by dollars and cents (2 Cor. 8:1-5, 12). This is why it could be said of the widow who gave only two mites that she gave more than all the rich people (Mark 12:41-44).

God does not dramatically strike people dead before the church today for lying about their gifts, as he did in Acts 5, but many will be eternally lost for failing to give to the Lord's work as they should. No man on the face of the earth knows your personal circumstances and attitudes of heart like God does. But, be assured God will bring it all into judgment (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 16:27).

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A member of the church	10.00

"The true measure of loving God is to love Him without measure."

"Love looks through a telescope, envy through a microscope."

"We are shaped and fashioned by what we love."

"If there is anything better than to be loved, it is loving."

The Old and the New

By Ted Mountjoy

The Old Testament, or covenant, is a record of God's relationship with man prior to the coming of Jesus Christ. The New Testament, or covenant, deals with the life of Christ, and tells us how God would have us live today.

We are not governed, or held accountable, by the Old Testament. The Law, including the Ten Commandments, was a covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Horeb (Deut 5:1-21, Exod. 20). Since the old covenant was made only with Israel, they were the only ones to be governed and held accountable to the law, the law of Moses, the law of God, each expression referring to the same law (Neh. 8:1-8, Luke 2:22-27). The law was added because of transgressions, and was to last till the seed (Christ) should come (Gal. 3:19). The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, but now we are no longer under a schoolmaster, the law (Gal. 3:24-25). Hebrews 8:6-13 is the fulfillment of the prophesy of Jeremiah 31:31-34, that God would make a new and better covenant.

We are not governed, or held accountable, by the old covenant. For example, we don't offer animal sacrifices, we don't observe the Sabbath, and etc. We have a new and better covenant. But this is not to say that the Old Testament has no value to the Christian. It gives us a background leading up to the New Testament. It gives us examples of warning against wrong doing (1 Cor. 10:1-12). It contains lessons to comfort us (Rom. 15:4). The Old Testament is this and more, but we are to be governed by the New. The Old Covenant has been taken away (Heb. 10:9-10). Paul wrote, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

If we are no longer governed by the Old Testament, when did we come under the authority of the New? We know that the law (Old Testament) was still in effect at Jesus' birth, because Jesus was "Born under the law" (Gal. 4:4). The law was still in effect during Jesus' earthly life, because He told the multitudes to do and observe all that the scribes and Pharisees told them that was in accordance with the law that came by Moses (Matt. 23:1-3). Jesus, when healing the leper, told him to observe the law regarding the offering for the cleansing of a leper (Matt. 8:1-4).

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The Search for Deeper Spirituality

By Clovis Ragsdale

Though many people have little or no time for God, there are some, who, in their desire to attain a state of near perfection, resort to unusual ways to satisfy their conscience. For example, Monks and Nuns are orders of individuals who separate themselves from family, conveniences, and vocations, to give themselves wholly to serving God. The Amish and other Mennonites are examples of whole communities who separate themselves from society to achieve a deeper spirituality. Others have searched for a deeper spirituality through a high degree of emotionalism and speaking in tongues. To a lesser degree, some have experienced with retreats, holding hands while praying, candlelight services, etc. to draw closer to God.

All of the above are things men have devised in an effort to achieve their goal of a deeper degree of spirituality. We would like to offer the advice of two of the inspired apostles, which should be sufficient to help anyone reach this goal. In Galatians 5:22-25, the apostle Paul wrote, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Paul lists these nine characteristics as the means through which one may become more spiritually mature. The person who attains a deep degree of each of these has attained a deeper degree of spirituality.

In 1 Peter 2:1-2, the apostle Peter writes, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

To this, James adds, "But be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). When we practice in our lives what the Bible tells us to do, then we shall grow into a deeper and greater spirituality, and achieve our goal of a home in Heaven. ye may grow thereby." Peter is telling us that when we become a Christian, we are as a baby. Just as milk makes possible the physical growth of a child, the study of the word of God makes possible the spiritual growth of a Christian. Peter further states in 2 Peter 1:5-11, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make

Immorality Versus Christianity (Cont.)

First, the church must overcome the danger of conformity to the world (Rom. 12:2). The church must exist in the world, but must not be of the world (John 17:15). The church, having been called out of the world, must maintain that separate relationship of holiness (2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9).

Second, it must seek to be pure to have the proper influence on the world. There is a great opportunity for the church to serve as leavening, savoring and influencing the world (1 Cor. 5:6; Matt. 5:13-15).

Third, the church must take a firm stand against every form of evil. We must speak where the Bible speaks and keep silent where it is silent. Preachers must preach the word, and members must obey it. Beloved, I mean all of it. Some are taking just what suits their mode of life. The truth is the only thing that saves (John 8:32, 2 Tim. 4:1-4). A strong stand must be taken on marriage and divorce. A Bible attitude toward sin and error should lead to a proper form of discipline for immoral members (1 Cor. 5). A strong stand for purity should come from the classrooms, pulpits, newspaper, radio, television, and every other form of communication. Immoral influences are destroying men's sensitivity to the gospel and must be exposed. Jesus died for the church to present it to himself "A glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing (Eph. 5:27). Paul's desire was that the church might be presented to Christ as a chaste virgin (2 Cor. 11:2). There is no greater challenge to be accepted than to fight the immoral influences of the world.

The word of God is our sword and is powerful enough to defeat the foe. With faith and courage let us go forth as a mighty army on its way to battle. In so doing we will bring glory to God and salvation to the lost. Through Christ, the Captain of our salvation, we shall ultimately be victorious!

"A bitter world cannot be sweetened by a sour religion."

"Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight." Prov. 12:22.

"Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard." Prov. 13:15

"There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches." Prov. 13:7.

"A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke." Prov. 13:1.

"Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal."

"The most destructive acid in the world is found in a sour disposition."

"You don't advertise your religion by wearing a label - you do it by living a life."

"Set not your mind on high things, but content yourself with what is humble. Be not wise in your own conceit."

"He will be said to flourish in virtue who aids the forsaken."

"Those who look for the faults of others are often ignorant of their own. Those who are aware of their own faults and imperfections are, as a rule, humble in mind."

"The only people, scientific or other, who never make mistakes are those who do nothing."

"He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips." Proverbs 20:19

"Love is love's reward."

"Tis better to struggle into heaven than to slide pleasantly into hell."

"No man can ever obtain peace with God by signing a nonaggression pact with the devil."

They Hated Knowledge

By Harold Turner

In Proverbs 1:24-30 God warned Israel that their present course of action would eventually lead them into a state wherein He would no more respond to their cries. He warned them that they would call upon Him, but He would not hear, and that they would search for Him, but would not find Him. The reason for this separation was not said to be a result of their immorality or wickedness, but simply a result of indifference toward God's word. Notice what God said to these people, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. . . . For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way."

This warning was to find application many times in the history of Israel. They made frequent departures from God throughout their generations. The one basic cause for their departures could be summed up in the words, "They hated knowledge." Time and again God sent prophets to warn His people, but the warnings went unheeded, and the prophets were abused for sounding the warnings. In the days of Jeremiah God pleaded with them, saying, "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward." They further declared, "We will not walk therein." (Jer. 6:16; 7:23-24).

Hosea describes these people of his time, saying, "There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land." He sounded God's warning to these people, saying, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee . . . seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God." (Hosea 4:1, 6). So indifferent to the word of God had these people become, that within one hundred years after Hosea wrote these words, the people had completely lost the book of the law. When the book was finally discovered, it was brought and read before king Josiah. The message of this book shocked the king, and he replied in tears, "For great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our

fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us." These people had become so involved in other activities they had gradually departed farther and farther away from God. And by the time the prophets sounded out warnings, it was too late. The people had become too hardened to turn back.

In the New Testament we are reminded, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." (Romans 15:4). Too, in 1 Cor. 10:11, Paul said of these things, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition." We too may become so involved in the activities of this life that we drift away from the study and meditation of God's word, and reach the point where we will not turn back.

We are urged to study God's word, for it is the only guide to keep us on the right track. In 1 Timothy 4:13-16 Paul wrote, "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things: give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

It is so easy for us to let our time be consumed by things of lesser importance, things that rob us from periods of study and meditation. Israel was made to feel the wrath of God many times for negligence and indifference toward His word. May the lessons they suffered serve as warnings to each of us, and may these warnings motivate us to have a greater appreciation for God's word. God said those who were negligent, and had no time to listen to his counsel, hated knowledge. Maybe the words of Jesus in Matt. 6:24 will help us to see this attitude more clearly. He said, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other." This principle can likewise be applied to our reading material, and the use of our time. If we love God's word, we will hold to it, but on the other hand, if we hate it, we will find no time for it. May we all be awakened to the dangers of negligence, and the involvement in trivial things, and return to a diligent study and practice of God's word in our daily lives.

"If nobody loves you, be sure it is not your own fault."

The Old and the New (Cont.)

Jesus came to fulfill the law and the prophets (Matt. 5:17). He said, "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Just as sure as Jesus fulfilled all that was prophecied about him, he also fulfilled the law (Luke 24:44). And in doing so, the law could and did pass away. It was prophecied in Isaiah 53:12 that the Christ would bear the sins of many. Jesus Christ did not fulfill this prophesy until he bore our sins on the cross. Neither did the law pass away until his death, for he "Took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14).

Hebrews 9:16-18 tells us: "For where a testament is, there must also be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood." It is like a man today, who makes a "last will and testament." As long as the man lives, he can change and do what he wants with that will, or testament, because it takes effect only at his death.

The Old Testament was taken out of the way, nailed to the cross of Jesus. The New Testament came into effect when the old was taken away (Heb. 9:16-18). This is why Jesus was able to say to his apostles, "ALL POWER (Authority) is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:18-20).

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