

WISDOM

PURE

PEACEABLE

GENTLE

EASILY INTREATED

MERCY & GOOD FRUITS

WITHOUT PARTIALITY

WITHOUT HYPOCRISY

True Women Bible Study

**Ladies Bible Study by
Lori Henry**

Wisdom

A Study in Proverbs 9

We have been offered an invitation! The hostess has been quite busy preparing for our arrival! She has cut out seven pillars; she has killed her beasts for our dinner; she has mixed her wine with spices; she has set a beautiful table for us to dine around; she has sent out her maidens to summon us; she has called out from the highest places of the city.

As we meet in the market places, on the streets, in each other's homes, our conversation, undoubtedly, turns to this illustrious invitation! We turn to each other in excited anticipation and ask, "Are you going?" After all, she, Wisdom, is quite the hostess!

We imagine the table setting! The china, the glasses, the silverware! And then there's the food. We can only imagine what her home looks like! It must be amazing!



A mixture of pure excitement and a little trepidation drums in our hearts. Looking our very best, we make our way there. Sure enough, we find things just as she described, but there is more, much, much more. . .

wisdom

noun

wis·dom | \ 'wiz-dəm \

Definition of *wisdom*

1a: ability to discern inner qualities and relationships : INSIGHT

b: good sense : JUDGMENT

2: a wise attitude, belief, or course of action



Wisdom is urging those who are simple to come. *Wisdom* is urging those who want understanding to come, eat of her bread, and drink of the wine which she has mingled. This bread is not just a loaf of bread that she has set out. In **John 6:35** Jesus tells us, "*I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall **never** hunger; and he that believeth on me shall **never** thirst.*" It is *spiritual* food. Christ says **John 6:51**, "*I am the living Bread which came down from heaven... and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*" **Matthew 5:6** says, "*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*"

The Bible tells us in **Proverbs 16:16**, "How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!" Education is not a bad thing! As a result of education, we have thousands upon thousands of gifted doctors, lawyers, architects, teachers and more! As Christians, however, our main emphasis in learning should be to learn everything we can about Christ and the Gospel. **God is our wisdom!** *True* wisdom cannot be gained apart from the Word of God.

I remember reading a story in Reader's Digest one time that made me chuckle. A 90 year-old dad and his 70 year-old son were putting in fence posts. The 70 year-old had a 50-year-old son who was watching the two of them. As the two older men worked, the 90 year-old dad became frustrated with his 70 year-old son because the son thought he knew better than the dad how to put in the fence posts. They argued for a few minutes, until the 90 year-old dad finally threw down a fence post, stomped off and could be heard saying, "Kids these days! You can't teach them anything!"

Psalm 119:169 says, "Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding, (or wisdom) according to thy word." Let's look at Proverbs 2 together. As Solomon is speaking, he is encouraging his son to "incline his ear unto *wisdom*, and apply his heart to *understanding*:" According to v. 2, we must first have a hearing *ear*, which will in turn give us a *heart* of understanding, or wisdom. Let's read the next several verses, and fill in the blanks:

v. 3) "Yea, if thou _____ after _____, and liftest up thy voice for _____; v.4) if thou _____ her as _____, and searchest for her as for _____; v.5) Then shalt thou understand the _____ of the _____, and find the _____ of God. v.6) For the LORD giveth _____: out of his _____ cometh _____ and _____. v.7) He layeth up sound _____ for the _____: He is a _____ to them that walk _____."

Seek and Search

Oh, how we need wisdom! Did you notice in **v. 4** where it says if we *seek* wisdom *as silver*? To seek is to *work* at something. Silver is not going to just suddenly show up on our doorstep! We cannot just sit on our sofa and expect to accomplish anything if we truly want to seek silver! We have to get up, *learn* about silver, about mining silver, then secure the necessary equipment to begin mining, and we must also know *where* to look! **We must be familiar with how to mine!**

Shallow silver deposits can be removed through **strip mining**. Shallow deposits of silver may be **strip-mined**, a process that involves the removal of a layer of topsoil from an ore deposit located beneath the surface. Heavy earth-moving equipment is used to excavate ore deposits, and explosives may be needed to break up the earth or the ore deposits. It takes a lot of work!

Also notice in **v. 4** that it says that we will search for wisdom as for *hid treasures*. Again, we cannot and will not find hid treasures by sitting and doing nothing! It takes work!

Treasure hunting is the *physical* search for treasure. For example, treasure hunters try to find sunken shipwrecks and retrieve artifacts with market value. This industry is generally fueled by the market for antiquities. The practice of treasure-hunting can be controversial, as locations such as sunken wrecks or cultural sites may be protected by national or international law concerned with property ownership, marine salvage, sovereign or state vessels, commercial diving regulations, protection of cultural heritage and trade controls.

There have been some major treasures found throughout the years! One such treasure was the Cuerdale Hoard.

THE CUERDALE HOARD



Found: 1840

Value: Approximately \$3.2 million

While repairing the embankment of the River Ribble in Cuerdale, near Preston in England, a group of workmen dug up a lead box. Inside was one of the biggest hoards of Viking treasure ever found—more than 8600 items were documented, including silver coins, various bits of jewelry, and silver ingots.

Although the majority of the items originated in English Viking kingdoms, some of the treasure was also traced back to other regions, including Scandinavia, Italy, and Byzantium.

The treasure was presented to Queen Victoria, and some of it is now on display in the British Museum (as seen above). The workmen who found it, meanwhile, managed to grab a coin each.

Can you just imagine the excitement and awe that came over those workmen as they discovered such a treasure? The wealth of such a find was incomparable!! Yet, here we sit with the incomparable wealth of God's Word in our own hands, and many times we will not be bothered to take the time to *seek* and *search* its fathomless bounty!

We find wisdom in God's Word. How we seek it is our decision. We can expect others to teach us wisdom, and jot down notes. . .only. We can decide that it's not really important to us, and later reap the consequences. Or, we can *seek* it diligently, as we would for silver. We can *search* for it, as we would for hid treasures!

Read the following verses and fill in the blanks:

Matthew 6:33 "But _____ ye _____ the kingdom of _____, and his _____; and all these _____ shall be _____ unto you."

Matthew 7:7 "_____, and it shall be given you; _____, and ye shall _____; _____, and it shall be _____ unto you:"

Colossians 3:1 "If ye then be _____ with _____, _____ those things which are _____, where Christ _____ on the _____ hand of _____."

Jeremiah 29:13 "And ye shall _____ me, and _____ me, when ye shall _____ for me with all your _____."



So, are you going to the banquet? I am! I'm so excited! But wait! There's one more thing! Before we go we must remember this:

Psalms 111:10 "The *fear of the LORD* is the **beginning** of *wisdom*: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth forever." There. I think we are ready! Let's be on our way!

PURE



pure

[pyoor] ADJECTIVE *synonyms:*

clean · clear · fresh · refreshing · unpolluted · untainted ·
wholesome · healthy · virtuous · moral · good · righteous ·
honorable · reputable · honest · upright · upstanding · **chaste**

The Purity of Christ

Our highest, ultimate example of purity is **Christ**! Let's look at these verses and fill in the blanks:

2 Cor. 5:21, "For he hath made him to be _____ for us, who _____ no _____: that we might be _____ the _____ of God in him."

1 Peter 1:19, "But with the _____ blood of _____, as of a lamb _____ blemish and without _____:"

1 Peter 2:22-23, " Who did no _____, neither was _____ found in his _____: Who, when he was _____, reviled not again; when he _____, he _____ not; but _____ himself to him that judgeth righteously."

Hebrews 7:26, "For such an _____ priest became us, who is _____, harmless, _____, separate from _____, and made higher than the _____;"

1 John 3:3-5, "And every man that hath this _____ in him _____ himself, even as _____ is _____. Whosoever _____ sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye _____ that he was manifested to take _____ our _____; and in _____ is no _____."

The phrase "**What would Jesus do?**", often abbreviated to **WWJD**, became popular particularly in the United States **in the late 1800s** after the widely read book by Charles Sheldon entitled, "In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do." The phrase had a resurgence in the US and elsewhere in the 1990s and as a personal motto for Christians who used the phrase as a reminder of their belief to act in a manner that would demonstrate the love of Jesus through their actions. **(Charles Sheldon was not on point biblically with all of his thoughts and writings, but these four letters and what they stand for are a great reminder to be pure in our thoughts and actions!)**

THE OPPOSITE OF PURITY AND HOLINESS

The opposite of purity is defilement, (*to mar or spoil*.) There are two areas of defilement that we might consider. First of all, there is the defilement of the *flesh*. A person can defile his body through various forms of sexual immorality, drugs, drunkenness and gluttony.

The big area of defilement is in the area of *the heart*, which includes *mind and spirit*. We can say that unless the heart of man is first defiled it is impossible to really defile the flesh. All fleshly defilements first begin in the heart. It is for this reason that the biblical writer says, "*Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life.*" (**Prov. 4:23**).

King David realized this truth after he had fallen into his awful sin. He committed adultery with the wife of one of his own great military heroes. To cover up the crime he had the man killed. When David was confronted with his sin he came into deep repentance as recorded for us in **Psalm 51:10** where he says, "*Create in me a clean (pure heart), O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*" David came to realize that evil deeds spring from the heart, not from the flesh. There is a process that the Bible makes very clear in **James 1:14-15**, when "sins fruit" is mentioned: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Jesus dealt with this matter when he spoke on the subject of clean and unclean foods. He instructed us that the body is made unclean by what proceeds out of a person's heart. This includes evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. (**Mt. 15:19**).

HOW MAY WE HAVE PURE HEARTS?

If we desire a pure heart, we must ask for it like David did. He said, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*" (**Psa. 139:23-24**). We must gain the courage to face our real selves and take a hard look at our true motives. We are not fooling God, and chances are that we are not fooling as many people as we think. We must be willing to open up our innermost beings to the thorough searching of God, without fear and in simple faith. We must let God examine and change our real motives. Those hidden drives and ambitions and those dark secrets of our lives must be brought to the light. This whole process is known as repentance.

Moses dealt with this very matter when he challenged Israel: "*Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer*" (**Deut. 10:16**). God wants to do a deep and personal work in us. He desires to get past the outward, fleshly things into the inner man of the heart – into the area of desires, goals, loves, and aims of life.

We read in scripture a very unflattering assessment of the heart of man in its natural state. The scripture says in **Jer. 17:9**, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*" But God also says in **Jer. 17:10**, "*I the LORD search the heart.*"

You know, the natural heart of man is bent on evil, but God desires to give each of us a new heart – a pure heart. God desires that we have a *spiritual* "heart transplant." The Lord says in **Ezekiel 36:26**, "*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*"

As Christians we call this *the new birth*, and we believe it comes by accepting Jesus and allowing him to take up residence within our innermost being. It was for this purpose that he died. **Titus 2:14** says, "*Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*" Once we have called upon the Lord as David did, and circumcised our hearts as Moses bade us do, God wants us to progress on in purity. The scripture challenges us in **1 Pet. 1:22**, "*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*" He exhorts us further in **2 Cor. 7:1**, "*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*" And **1 John 3:3** tells us, "*And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.*"

God desires that we keep our hearts and minds fixed upon him, upon that which is pure (**Phil. 4:8**). Such a one may ascend to the hill of the Lord and may stand in his holy place. He or she is the one who has clean hands and a pure heart (**Psa. 2:3-4**). This one shall see God and live in his presence forever. This one, above all people on earth, will be truly blessed and happy.

Purity of our heart

The Bible instructs us in **Proverbs 4:23** to, "Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life." Reading this, we realize that guarding our heart is very serious business!

There are specific things that we *must* do to keep our physical heart healthy. Here are a few that have proven to be very helpful:

5 Things to Do Every Day to Keep Your Heart Healthy.

- Eat healthy fats, NOT trans fats. We need fats in our diet, including saturated and polyunsaturated and unsaturated fats. One fat we don't need ...
- Practice good dental hygiene, especially flossing your teeth daily. Dental health is a good indication of overall health, including your heart ...
- Get enough sleep. Sleep is an essential part of keeping your heart healthy. If you don't sleep enough, you may be at a higher risk for ...
- Don't sit for too long at one time. In recent years, research has suggested that staying seated for long periods of time is bad for your health ...

Wow! That is a lot of information about our heart! We see that eating correctly and healthy is essential for our physical heart to *be* healthy. Exercise, rest, good hygiene are also essential for a healthy heart! A lot of emphasis is placed on taking care of our *physical* heart, and rightly so! It is our lifeline. We cannot live without our physical heart!

Now, what about our *spiritual* heart? How do we keep our spiritual heart healthy? In **Proverbs 4:23** to, "Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life." Reading this, we realize that guarding our heart is very serious business! We must keep it healthy. How? The first thing we can do is ask for a pure heart! Let's read **Psalm 51:10** and fill in the blanks:

"Create in me a _____ (or pure) _____, O God; and _____ a right _____ within _____."

Asking for a pure heart means that we want God to control our hearts. It's the same as saying, "Lord, I can't do this alone. I know that my heart is desperately wicked, and the only way I can have a clean heart is to ask you, and depend on you!" **Psalm 19:8** tells us, "The statutes (or the Word of the Lord), are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is **pure**, enlightening the eyes." Can our eyes be enlightened to what is true and pure without the LORD? No! We also read in **Psalm 12:6-7**, "The words of the LORD are **pure** words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, **purified** seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou

shalt preserve them from this generation forever." There is a definite link between the Word of God and a pure heart. We must be in His Word, learning what to do, to have a pure heart.

We are not to be like the Pharisees, who strived to look pure, but their hearts were full of corruption and defilement. Look at **Matthew 23**. In verses **25-27**, Jesus begins with the word, "*woe*." *Woe* means *great sorrow, distress, despair and heartache*. Why is Jesus warning them of woe? It is because they had everything "right", as far as appearances, but were just like if we clean a cup and saucer, and it looks all white and shiny, but didn't clean the inside. Jesus said that inside, the Pharisees were full of extortion, (*the practice of obtaining something, especially money, through force or threats*), and excess, (*an amount of something that is more than necessary, permitted, or desirable*.)

In verses **27-28** of **Matthew 23**, Jesus compares the Pharisees to being like whitewashed tombs which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside they are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness!



The principal part of the Jewish religion consisted in *outward washings and cleansings*. Why? The historic requirement for priests was to first **wash their hands**, together with the classical rabbinical belief that non-priests were also required to **wash their hands** before taking part in a holy act, such as prayer, was adhered to very strongly. The idea was to be not only physically clean, but to also be spiritually clean. (See **John 2:6**).

The only way we can be thoroughly clean is to be washed by Jesus. Read **Psalm 51:5-7** and fill in the blanks:

" Behold, I was shapen in _____; and in _____ did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest _____ in the _____ parts: and in the _____ part thou shalt make me to know _____. _____ me with hyssop, and I shall be _____; _____ me, and I shall be _____ than _____."

Purity of heart is to have one thought and that thought be God. Let's read **Psalm 27:4** together. David was understanding what it was to constantly and consistently be thinking of God. That is precisely why the Bible says in **Matthew 5:8**, "Blessed are the *pure* in heart: for they shall see God.

In these uncertain days, hearts seek after many things. People may pretend that they are seeking God with all their heart and with all their strength, but often the telltale signs betray their true motives. Purity of heart deals with *motives* and *hidden purposes*. The writer of Proverbs says, "*Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.*" (**Prov. 20:5**). Yet, the Lord knows man's heart and carefully deals with it. The scripture says, "*The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.*"

Once there was a king in Jerusalem by the name of Amaziah. In some ways he was a great king, but in other ways he was not so great. The scripture testifies of him, "*He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, but not wholeheartedly*" (**2 Chron. 25:2**). Imagine that! It is possible even to do the right things and have a wrong heart. God examines the heart.

Young David was chosen by God, and he went on to become not only the greatest king Israel ever had, but he became the greatest seeker after God. With his life he defined purity of heart in a way it had not been defined before. It was not that David lived a sinless life. He probably sinned worse than many people in the church today, but he always came running back after God, even in tears of remorse.

When God sent Samuel to look for his chosen king, the prophet thought God was looking for a man *with outstanding appearance and stature*. The prophet looked upon one of the sons of Jesse, thinking that he must surely be the chosen king. At last God said to the prophet, "*...Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*" (**1 Sam. 16:7**).



As Christian **women**, what does purity look like in our lives? *Every verse* we have already read applies to us, but there are some specific verses that talks about our purity. Read **Titus 2:3-5** and fill in the blanks:

"The _____ women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh _____, not false _____, not given to much _____, _____ of _____ things; That they may _____ the _____ women to be _____, to love their _____, to love their _____. To be discreet, _____, keepers at _____, good, obedient to their own _____, that the word of _____ be not _____."

Other verses talk about the **youth**. Read **1 Timothy 4:12** and fill in the blanks:

"Let no man _____ thy youth; but be thou an _____ of the _____, in _____, in _____, in _____, in charity, in spirit, and in faith, in _____."

Also **2 Tim. 2:22**:

"Flee also youthful _____; but follow _____, faith, _____, peace, with them that call on the _____ out of a _____."

What about **children** and purity? Read **Proverbs 20:11** and fill in the blanks:

"Even a _____ is know by his _____, whether his _____ be _____, and whether it be _____."



Pure Religion

Let's read **James 1:27** and fill in the blanks:

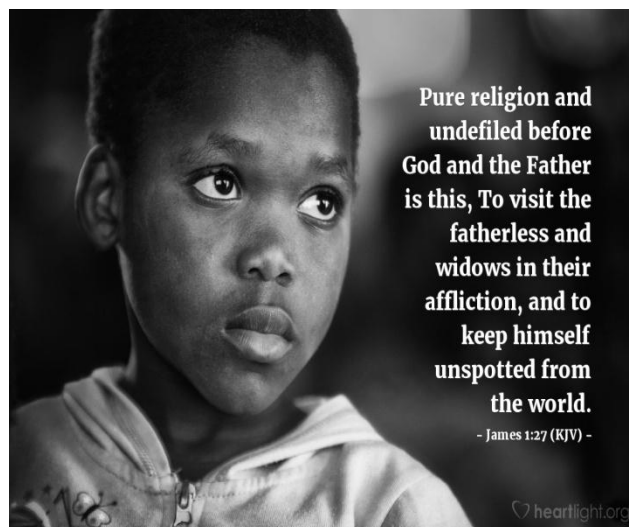
"_____ religion and undefiled before _____ and the _____ is this, To _____ the _____ and _____ in their _____, and to _____ himself _____ from the _____."

We learned that the Pharisees did many things to be seen of man. They wanted the attention. They wanted everyone to think that they were super spiritual. Everything was done with the wrong motive...the wrong heart.

The Lord said that ***Pure*** religion is to visit the fatherless and widows. What "motive" is there in doing this? God knows that basically, there is no motive of gaining anything when doing this work. Our names will not be heralded over a loud speaker. We will not be called forward onto the church platform to receive a prize or a standing ovation. It is not flashy work. It is where the rubber hits the road kind of work. It is pure and caring work. Concern for others more than ourselves.

Does that sound like Someone we know? Jesus visited many people who were down and out. The woman at the well. . .sinners. . .tax collectors. . .people who no one cared about, or who everyone despised. He did not do it for recognition or a pat on the back. He did it because he loved them and wanted them to know Him. He wants us to do it to show them His love. Perhaps to introduce Him to them.

Visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world. No trumpets. No banners. Pure....like Jesus.



PEACEABLE



peaceable

[ˈpiːsəb(ə)l]

ADJECTIVE

1. inclined to avoid argument or violent conflict.
"they were famed as an industrious, peaceable, practical people"

synonyms:

[peace-loving](#) · unwarlike · [nonbelligerent](#) · [nonviolent](#) · noncombative · nonaggressive · [conflict-free](#) · [easy](#) · [easygoing](#) · [placid](#) · [gentle](#) · [meek](#) · [mild](#) · [inoffensive](#) ·

antonyms:

[aggressive](#) · [belligerent](#)

synonyms:

[peaceful](#) · strife-free · [harmonious](#) · [amicable](#) · [amiable](#) · [friendly](#) · [cordial](#) · [well behaved](#) · [law-abiding](#) · [disciplined](#) · [orderly](#) · [civilized](#)

You, like me, no doubt, have seen a sharp increase in crime in America. . .especially within the last year. According to statistics, crime has *decreased* in America as compared to past years, but certainly not according to what we see happening right before our very eyes!

Rioting, child sex trafficking, adult sex trafficking, lootings, the murder of police officers, attacks on police officers, hate crimes, and the list goes on and on! Sadly, our nation has become a place where peace has begun to corrode.

In this unstable, often scary world we live in, what are we to do as Christians? How are we to react to all of this confusion?

Our second pillar is "**Peaceable**", and we are going to look at what the Bible has to say about peace!

Our Mind and Peace

The word "*peace*" in the Bible, from the Greek word (eireinei), refers to a *mental attitude* of tranquility based on a relationship with God. It describes the result of a person's correct response to God's grace. The Bible uses "*peace*" in two ways. There is *personal peace* with God which comes when a person accepts Jesus Christ as Saviour. Then, there is the peace of God which is available on a *daily* basis as the believer walks closely with God.

As our Good Shepherd, we find peace at His side. We learn in **Psalm 23:1**, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Want what? Any good thing that is needful for our walk with Him. Let's look at **verse 2** of **Psalm 23**, and fill in the blanks:

V.2, "He _____ me to lie _____ in _____ pastures:
he leadeth me beside the _____ waters.

This certainly brings to mind a peaceful scene. Green pastures, still waters. Calmness. Peace. For a sheep to lie down, it must be free from fear or agitation. Green pastures are its necessary food. And sheep would not lie down next to a roaring river. They are afraid of fast moving water. But still waters. . .ah, there is a peaceful setting in which the sheep will gladly lie down!

Psalm 23:3 goes on to tell us, "He *restores* my soul." Restore means to *rehabilitate*, to *return*, to *fix*, to *mend*. We certainly can have need of our soul needing fixed or mended in this sin-laden world, can't we? This world is waxing worse, but we can run to our Shepherd and he will make us to "lie down in green pastures and beside still waters," and give us a peace in our hearts during the storms of life!

In **Matthew chapter 14**, there is a very interesting story. Jesus' disciples were in a ship, and Jesus was up on a mountain apart from them to pray. The ship was in the midst of the sea, and there was a very scary, vicious wind that kicked up and the ship was being tossed with the waves. At about 3-6 a.m., Jesus went out to them, walking on the sea! When His disciples saw Him, they were very afraid! Jesus spoke to them saying, "Be of good cheer; **it is I**; be not afraid."

Peter said, "Lord, if it is you, let me come to you on the water." Jesus answered, "Come." Peter did start to walk on the water to Jesus, but when he saw the wild wind, he was afraid, and began to sink, and cried out asking Jesus to save him!

When we take our eyes off of our Savior, our Shepherd, and look at the circumstances around us, we can become afraid, and feel like we are sinking! Notice that Jesus immediately stretched forth his hand and caught Peter, and said to him, "O thou of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Why do we doubt that Jesus can calm our seas? **Verse 32** tells us, "And when they were come into the ship, *the wind ceased*. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

We have that same God today! We are His children. We are His sheep. He delights in taking care of us. The wind ceased. It stopped under His mighty control! There is none other like Him! He is powerful, and He brings peace! He is the *Prince of Peace!*

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, **The Prince of Peace.**” (Isaiah 9:6)

Isaiah 26:3 tells us, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect **peace**, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee." We also read in **Matthew 11:28-30**, "Come onto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find *rest* unto your souls. For my yoke is *easy*, and my burden is *light*." Also in **John 16:33**, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have **peace**. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." In **Isaiah 54:10**, the Bible tells us, "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my **peace** be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee." Peace during the storms of life. Peace, God's wonderful peace!

TWO CONDITIONS ARE MENTIONED IN ORDER THAT WE MAY HAVE PERFECT PEACE

Who is it that God will keep in perfect peace? It is the one: (1) “**whose mind is steadfast**”; and (2) “**who trusts in you.**” (**Is. 26:3**) Both these expressions indicate faith, but one is a *head* word, the other is a *heart* word. What is the difference? With our head we believe, with our heart we trust; with our head we believe that God is the Author of peace, the Giver of peace; with the heart we trust Him to bestow what He promises.

One concluding word: notice that **Isaiah 26:3** *begins* with God (Thou) and *ends* with God (Thee); and the trusting soul goes in between. Perfect **peace** is not an experience, a doctrine, an “it”, but **the Lord Himself**. As the hymn writer puts it:

1. Like a river glorious is God’s perfect **peace**,
Over all victorious, in its bright increase;
Perfect, yet it floweth fuller every day,
Perfect, yet it groweth deeper all the way.
 - *Refrain:*
Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest
Finding, as He promised, perfect **peace** and rest.
2. Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand,
Never foe can follow, never traitor stand;
Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care,
Not a blast of hurry touch the spirit there.
3. Every joy or trial falleth from above,
Traced upon our dial by the Sun of Love;
We may trust Him fully, all for us to do;
They who **trust Him wholly find Him wholly true**.

So, where you find peace mentioned in the Bible it refers either to the *reconciliation of a Christian in salvation*, as in **Eph. 2:14,17**, or to the *mental attitude* found in believers.

2 Tim. 1:7, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Also mentioned in **2 Thessalonians 3:16**, "Now the Lord of **peace** Himself give you **peace** always by all means. The Lord be with you all."

Living Peaceably With Others

Look at **Romans 12:18**, and fill in the blanks:

"If it be _____, as much as lies within _____, live
_____ with _____ men."

Do you know what it means to *cultivate*? It means to try to develop, pursue, court, foster, nurture, or encourage. It is a farming term. It also means to loosen up, or break up the soil. **If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably**, or be at **peace**, seek after **peace**, pursue it, and cultivate it:

with all men;

with those that we are immediately concerned with, in a natural relation; so husbands should live peaceably with their wives, and wives with their husbands; parents with their children, and children with their parents; masters with their servants, and servants with their masters; and one brother, relation, and friend, with another: and so with all we are concerned with in a spiritual relation, as members of Christ, and in the same church state; such should be at **peace** among themselves, (**1 Thessalonians 5:13**) ; **peace** should rule in their hearts, (**Colossians 3:15**) , and they should study to keep "the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of **peace**", (**Ephesians 4:3**) : and, with all we are concerned in a civil sense; saints should live peaceably in the neighborhood, towns, cities, and countries, where they dwell, and show themselves to be the peacemakers; should pray for the peace of the place where they are; and do all that in them lies to promote it, by living themselves peaceably and quietly, in all godliness and honesty; yea, they should live peaceably with their very enemies, "*if it be possible*"; which is rightly put, for there are some people of such tempers and dispositions, that it is impossible to live peaceably with; for when others are for peace, they are for war; and in some cases it is not only impracticable, but would be unlawful; as when it cannot be done consistent with holiness of life and conversation, with the edification of others, the truths of the Gospel, the interest of religion, and the glory of God; these are things that are never to be sacrificed for the sake of peace with men: the apostle adds another limitation of this rule, "*as much as lies in you*"; for more than this is not required of us; nothing should be wanting on our parts; every step should be taken to cultivate and maintain peace; the blame should lie wholly on the other side; it becomes the saints to live peaceably themselves, if others will not with them.

We should **not** be the one, as a Christian women who love the Lord, to arouse a fight within our family, or to fan the flames of an argument. We should **not** be the one, as a Christian, to be a "bad" neighbor--always getting in our neighbor's business, or calling to complain about the hedges! We should **not** be the one at our church who has a big mouth--always complaining, or butting into something that we are not involved in! We should **not** be the one who makes hateful remarks about our leaders, country or President! We should try our VERY best to live a peaceable life with those around us. . . in our home and church! Learn to walk away. Learn to let silly comments towards you alone. Learn to die to self, and see the bigger picture---WWJD??

Look at **James 3:13-18**. Let's read these verses together. Notice in **verse 13** that a question is asked of us? "Who is a wise man and endued or *equipped* with knowledge among you? Then, the answer is given, "let him show out of a good conversation (or consistent life), his works with meekness and wisdom. I see peace here. Do you? meekness means strength in control. Our lifestyle should mimic Christ's. Oh, yes, there were times that Jesus taught with authority and even rebuked people, but more often, He was an example of meekness and wisdom.

Verses 14-16 talk about worldliness and its fruits. Let's read these verses together. Do you notice that at the end of all of these worldly traits, in **v. 16** it comments that "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

HOW DOES THIS PERFECT PEACE COME TO US?

- **By Christ Jesus.** Turn to **Philippians 4:7** again and notice that the Lord Jesus Christ is the channel through whom the peace of God flows into our souls. This peace within is the possession of the Christian alone. There is no peace for anyone who does not possess Christ and who is not resting on the finished work of Christ for salvation. It is “the blood of Jesus (which) whispers peace within” (**Colossians 1:20**).
- **By the Holy Spirit.** The Lord Jesus Christ procured peace for us upon the cross of Calvary, and that peace is offered to us through Him as the channel; but it is conveyed to our hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit —look up **Galatians 5:22**. As the Holy Spirit fills and floods our lives, so He produces this wonderful fruit within us.
- **By His Word.** Look up the great promise which is made in **Psalms 119:165**. Things and people can so often disturb us, or even cause us to stumble, but here is a promise of perfect peace to those people who love and meditate in and obey the Word of God.
- **By our obedience.** Look up **Leviticus 26:3-6**, and be sure to notice that most important word “*If*”. God guarantees to us that if we will walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, He will keep our hearts in perfect peace; if we will do our part, then God will surely do His part.
- **By plenty of praise and prayer.** The promise of **Philippians 4:7** is preceded by the conditions mentioned in **verse 6**.
- **By wisdom.** **Proverbs 3:17**, talking about wisdom, tells us: "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

A word often translated “peace” in the Bible actually means “**to tie together as a whole**, when all essential parts are joined together.” *Inner peace*, then, is *a wholeness of mind and spirit, a whole heart at rest*. Inner peace has little to do with external surroundings.

Read **John 14:27**, and fill in the blanks: "_____ I _____ with you, my _____ I _____ unto you: not as the _____ giveth, give I unto you. Let not your _____ be _____, neither let it be _____."

In his final exhortation to the Philippians, Paul writes in **Chapter 4 verse 9**, "Those things, which ye have both _____ and received, and _____, and seen in me, do: and the God of _____ shall be with you." *May we, as Christian women, do the things which we have both learned and received and heard and seen---especially from the example of Christ, and the God of peace will be with us.*

GENTLE



gentle

adjective

gen·tle | \ 'jen-təl \
gentler \ 'jent-lər , -təl-ər \; **gentlest** \ 'jent-ləst , -təl-əst \

Definition of *gentle*

a: free from harshness, sternness, or violence used *gentle* persuasion

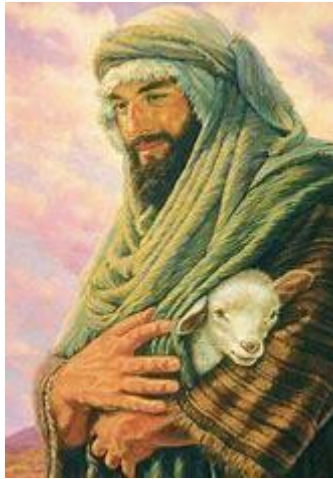
b: you show love and care for others in the way you act and speak. To have gentleness is to have a gentle spirit or nature about you. It is also a sensitivity of disposition and kindness of behavior, founded on strength and prompted by love.

Take a moment and picture, in your mind, someone holding a baby bird. Great care is taken to handle it carefully, cupping it within their hands. Now picture a brook babbling softly, swirling, clear and sparkling in the sunlight. Picture a new mother with a newborn baby. She is stroking the baby's soft hair and talking quietly to it. All of these things should give us a picture of what it is to be gentle. No harshness. No demanding. No raising of the voice. Just being gentle, calm, soft, mild.

Oh, how we need gentleness in our everyday lives! The world is a harsh, demanding, often rigid place where everyone is raising their voices about their rights! We do not see a lot of gentleness in the world today!

How do we "get" gentleness? Where does it come from? How do we incorporate it into our very lives? As Christians, we know that the best place to find answers is within the Word of God. We also know that the best example to follow is Jesus Christ. Let's look at Christ's example of gentleness by reading the following verses:

**CHRIST:
OUR EXAMPLE OF GENTLENESS**



Zechariah 9:9--"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy _____ cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; _____, and riding upon an _____, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

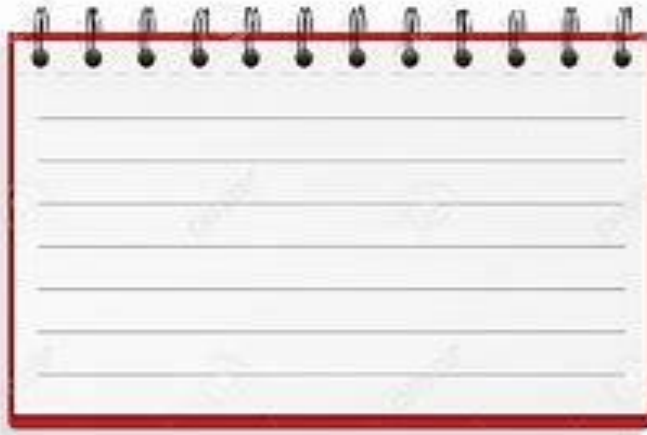
Isaiah 40:11--"He shall feed his flock like a _____: he shall gather the _____ with his arm, and _____ *them* in his bosom, *and* shall _____ lead those that are with young."

Isaiah 53:7--"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he _____ not his _____: he is brought as a _____ to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is _____, so he _____ not his mouth."

Matthew 11:28-30 -- "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you _____. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am _____ and _____: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is _____, and my burden is _____."

2 Corinthians 10:1--"Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and _____ of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:"

What are some key words and points that show Christ's gentleness in each of the verses we just read?



Recall in **Matthew 11:28-30** where Jesus actually says that He is "*meek and lowly in heart.*" In **Zechariah 9:9** we read where such characteristics as these are given of the Messiah. The meekness, humility, and lowliness of Christ appear as He rides a lowly donkey; in His subjection to his Father; in the whole of His behavior and conversation among men; in His submission to baptism; in the whole course of His obedience to God, and in His sufferings and death. He is to be imitated by all His children, who may learn many excellent things from His example, as well as from His doctrine, particularly, that even though he was God's Son, He humbled Himself to perform every duty with complete obedience. His disciples thought it not below them to conform to His example, to His will; because He set the example, that they should walk in His steps. There never was or will be such an example of humility, and lowliness of mind, as Christ; nor is there any example so worthy of our imitation as His.



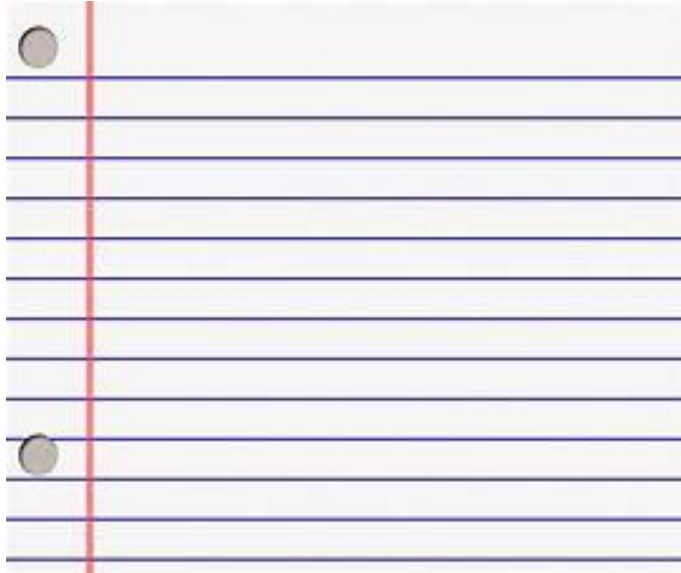
FOLLOWING CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

Read the following verses and fill in the blanks:

Ephesians 5:22-23---"But the fruit of the _____ is love, joy,
_____, longsuffering, _____, goodness, faith,
_____, temperance: _____ such there is no
_____."

Ephesians 4:32---"And be ye _____ one to another, _____,
forgiving one another, even as _____ for _____ sake hath forgiven you."

Let's read **Ephesians 4:1-3** together. Paul is writing here and he is exhorting unity amongst the believers. In **verses 2-3**, write down any words that would indicate gentleness:

A sheet of white lined paper with a vertical red margin line on the left side. There are two circular hole punches on the left edge. The paper has horizontal blue lines for writing.

Now notice in **verse 4** that Paul pens, "There is *one body*, and one Spirit." The church is the Body of Christ. If we have strife and anger, we lack gentleness. We are not acting or reacting as Christ would. We are to have unity.

Man's wisdom can lead to anger and strife, but God's wisdom is gentle.

In **Colossians chapter 3**, we learn that there are certain things that we are to "*put off*" as Christians, and other things we are to "*put on*." Let's look at **verses 8-9**. What things are we instructed to *put off*?



And in **verses 10, 12-14**, what things are we instructed to *put on*?



Do you notice that the things we are to put on are compared to the character of Christ Himself? (**Col. 3:10**) In **verse 12**, most of these words are synonyms of the word "*gentle*"... *mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and longsuffering*. Hmmm. Sounds very similar to the Fruit of the Spirit in **Galatians 5:22-23**, doesn't it?



Part of the Fruit of the Spirit is *gentleness*! Look at **2 Timothy 2:24-25** and fill in the blanks:

"And the _____ of the _____ must not _____; but be _____ unto all men, apt to teach, _____, in _____;"

We can see in **Titus 3:1-2**, Paul teaching how we should behave as citizens. Let's read these verses and fill in the blanks:

"Put them in mind to be _____ to principalities and powers, to _____ magistrates, to be ready to every _____ work, To speak _____ of no man, to be no _____, but _____, showing all _____ unto all men."

What About the Wife of an Unsaved Husband?

How do we display gentleness to an unsaved husband? Let's look at **1 Peter 3:1-4**. Let's discuss how gentleness is portrayed within these verses.



Paul's Example of Gentleness

In **1 Thessalonians 2**, Paul reminds the Thessalonians of the manner in which the gospel was preached unto them. He reminds them of all that had been endured...especially at Philippi, and that they did not come to them with deceit, or uncleanness, or guile. But they were there to preach the Gospel and to please God, not man. They didn't use flattering words, or a cover of covetousness....God being witness of this. They did not seek glory from man. In **verse 7**, Paul tells them, "But we were *gentle* among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:"

But we were gentle among you - Instead of using authority, we used only the most kind and gentle methods to win you and to promote your peace and order. The word here rendered "*nurse*," may mean any one who nurses a child, whether a mother or another person. It seems here to refer to a mother (compare **1 Thessalonians 2:11**), and the idea is, that the apostle felt for them the affectionate solicitude which a mother does for the child at her breast.

In **2 Corinthians 10:1**, Paul also says, "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and *gentleness of Christ*, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you."

In conclusion, in **Galatians 6:1-2**, Paul exhorts the Christians first, to *do* something, and second to *remember* something. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of **meekness**; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. **Gentleness. Gentleness in action.**



EASY TO BE INTREATED



entreat
[in'trēt, en'trēt]
VERB

entreated (*past tense*) · **entreated** (*past participle*)

1. ask someone earnestly or anxiously to do something.

synonyms:

implore · beseech · beg · plead with · supplicate · pray · ask · request · bid ·

[more]

- ask earnestly or anxiously for (something). Easily obeying, compliant. Entreat: Ready to obey, willing to listen, to yield. Not stubborn, obstinate, controlling, overbearing, or sour.

There are many areas where we need to be consistent. One of them is in our *attitude*. **James 3:17** give us a wonderful goal for our attitude: “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and **easy to be intreated**, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

I love the phrase, “Easy to be intreated.” It means *easily asked, not stubborn or sour*. To me it says, “Yes! Whatever you ask of me, I will do it and I will give it my 100% effort.”

So often, “No” or “I can’t” is our first response. Are you easily asked? Or do others dread asking you to do something because they are afraid of your answer or how you will respond?

If our goal is to be easily entreated, then our attitude should be:

ENTHUSIASTIC

- Attitude is a choice – you can choose your outlook today.
- Much of our attitude comes from our walk with the Lord – The joy of the Lord is our strength (Neh 8:10) – how is your strength? How is your joy? How is your walk with the Lord?
- Our attitude at the beginning of a task will affect its outcome more than anything else.
- Believe in what you do – with zeal. It doesn’t matter if you are copying a bulletin, typing a letter, cleaning a bathroom, or making phone calls – it is all for the Lord.

- If you find yourself with a sour attitude, get around enthusiastic people and catch their attitude.
- Grab onto what you do every day and execute it with enthusiasm!

ENCOURAGING

- Someone said, “A smile is a gently curved line that sets a lot of things straight.”
- Someone else said, “A cloudy day is no match for a sunny disposition.”
- Some people are “adders” and some are “takers.” Be an “adder”!
- Speak kind words – look for the good and praise it.
- Do something for another without being asked or when it is unexpected.
- Serving others will improve your attitude – you benefit and the others benefit too.
- The opposite of **encouraging** is **criticizing** Be careful about “I can’t believe she ...” or “Why did she do it that way?”

SELFLESS

1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

- People who are focused on themselves are more likely to react poorly when asked to do something, or have something added to their plate.
- People who are focused on themselves are less likely to make changes for the team than people focused on serving others.
- Ask yourself, “How can I give to others and this ministry?” Not, “What can I get from here?”
- Ask yourself, “How can I do more?” not “How can I do less?”
- Be generous with yourself and your time – “getting” *separates*; “giving” *unites*.
- When we remember that we are nothing but a sinner saved by grace, we can turn our attitude around more quickly.

ADAPTABLE

Charles Swindoll said, “Words can never adequately convey the incredible impact of our *attitude* toward life. The longer I live, the more convinced I become that life is 10% what happens to us and 90% ***how we respond to it.***”

- Our attitude is revealed quickly in adversity—when something doesn’t go our way, or we face obstacles, or when trouble arises. Do you react in the flesh? Or do you respond spiritually?
- Be willing to adapt yourself to the team; be flexible.
- Remain teachable.
- Fear of failure or fear of the unknown is a barrier to being adaptable – we don’t like the feeling of the unknown, so we resist.
- Think not why it can’t be done, but how it can be done.
- Adapt instead of complaining. Does complaining really help? (**Philippians 2:14**)
- Have a plan for the day, then be willing to change it!

Let's look at some great examples of women in the Bible who were, "*easy to be intreated*."

Esther



Esther was being brought up by her cousin, Mordecai. They had been carried away from Jerusalem in captivity. She was an orphan. She had already had catastrophic things happen to her. Now she was taken away from the only family she had, and was sent to the king's palace. Did Esther have any say in being chosen amongst many maidens to go to the king's palace? (See **Esther 2:8**.)

Now look at **Esther 2:9**. What do you notice about Esther in this verse that showed her compliance to her situation? Was Esther being adaptable to the new situation in which she found herself?

In **Esther 2:10**, we notice her response to something that Mordecai, her cousin, asked of her. Explain this. What would have happened if Esther had not been "easy to be intreated" to Mordecai's request for her?

Let's read **Esther 2:12-17**. Notice **verse 15**, particularly. Why do you think that Esther obtained favor in the sight of not only the king, (**v. 17**), but in the eyes of all them that looked upon her? (CR to **Proverbs 31:30**.)

Again, in **Esther 2:20**, we see that Esther obeyed her cousin, Mordecai. Explain what she did....(or *didn't*) do!

Let's read **verses 21-23** and see how Esther listened and informed. What was the amazing result of Esther being "**easily intreated**?"

We read in **Esther chapter 3** that Mordecai refused to bow down to the wicked Haman or reverence him. This caused Haman to become exceedingly angry! He devised a plan to tell King Ahasuerus about "these certain people" (**v. 8**), that had their own laws and didn't keep the king's laws. He really didn't tell the king *who* these people were! (Rewind to **chapter**

2:10 and 2:20.) What *would* have happened if Esther was stubborn, obstinate, controlling, overbearing, or sour?

In **Esther 3:9-15**, the Bible describes Haman's sneaky plan to have the Jews destroyed! Mordecai was beyond heartbroken! The Jews were heartbroken. . .there was great mourning, and fasting and weeping and wailing amongst them! Many lay in sackcloth and ashes! The thing was told to Esther by her maids and her chamberlains. Now Esther was "exceedingly grieved!"

Esther sent Hatach out to Mordecai to inquire. Mordecai told him of all that had happened and how Haman was going to destroy all the Jews!

Look at **Esther 4:8**. What was Mordecai requesting of Esther? When Hatach told Esther the words of her cousin, what words did she return to him? (v. 11) How did Mordecai respond to Esther? Read **Esther 4:13-14**.

Do you realize the situation that Esther was in? To go into the king's chamber uninvited could mean immediate death! She had some hard choices to make! Would she be selfish? Would she be non-compliant? Let's review one component of "easy to be intreated":

SELFLESS

1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

- People who are focused on themselves are more likely to react poorly when asked to do something, or have something added to their plate.
- People who are focused on themselves are less likely to make changes for the team than people focused on serving others.
- Ask yourself, "How can I give to others and this ministry?" Not, "What can I get from here?"
- Ask yourself, "How can I do more?" not "How can I do less?"
- Be generous with yourself and your time – "getting" *separates*; "giving" *unites*.
- When we remember that we are nothing but a sinner saved by grace, we can turn our attitude around more quickly.



Now let's read **Esther 4:15-17-5:3**. She was not selfish! She was not non-compliant. In fact, she knew what her fate could be! (**4:16**.)

Esther wisely requested of the king to have a banquet and invite Haman. Haman was overjoyed! He went home and told his family and friend all about the king's riches, his children, and how the king promoted him and advanced his position! Only he was invited with her and the king to the banquet! But something still drove him crazy! Look at **chapter 5:13-14**. What was it?

In **chapter 6** we read that the king could not sleep, so he asked that the book of the record of the chronicles be read to him, wherein he learned that Mordecai had told of the two men that meant to lay hands on the king. Asking if anything was done for Mordecai, the answer was no---nothing was done for him. Haman just happened to be in the court at the time, and the king asked what he would do to honor the man in whom the king delighteth! Naturally, Haman assumed the king meant him---so he poured it on thick!

"Put your royal apparel on him, let him ride your horse, bring him through the street of the city and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor!"

Then the king told Haman to quickly do those things to Mordecai the Jew, and to not fail to do any of the things that he mentioned! Haman did just that. . .humble pie and all. . .and paraded Mordecai, his sworn enemy, through the city. Poor Haman! He ran to his house crying, covering his head, and whined to his wife, Zeresh and to all his friends. As his wife and friends warned him, Haman was summoned to another banquet at the king's palace!

At this banquet, Esther was ready to *unveil* her plan to *reveal* Haman's plan! She told the king of all that Haman had done, and planned to do to *her* people, (**v. 4**) Remember in **chapter 2:17**? The king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins. She behaved herself wisely with grace and beauty. She

was honest and believable! Our attitude at the beginning of a task will affect its outcome more than anything else.

The king was beyond furious, and demanded to know who would concoct such an evil plan, and Esther was able to reveal that it was the wicked Haman. Haman was then hanged upon the very gallows he had built for Mordecai!

Because Esther was easy to be intreated, because she was ready to obey, willing to listen, to yield and not stubborn, obstinate, controlling, overbearing, or sour, this whole scenario turned in favor for God's chosen people, the Jews!

Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the Jew's enemy, unto Esther the queen. Then Esther revealed who Mordecai was to her, and the king took off his ring and gave it to him. Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

Esther also begged the king to put away the "mischief" of Haman and his device that he had devised against the Jews. Again, she wisely stood before the king and requested that the letters be reversed that were devised by Haman to destroy the Jews, and the king told her she could write for the Jews as she wanted to, in the king's name, and that she could seal the letter with the king's ring...and that no man could reverse it! And it was done. And the Jews rejoiced! And Mordecai was great in the king's house!



Purim

Jewish Holiday

Purim is a Jewish holiday which commemorates the saving of the Jewish people from Haman, an Achaemenid Persian Empire official who was planning to kill all the Jews, as recounted in the Book of Esther.

FULL OF MERCY

and

GOOD FRUITS



mercy

[ˈmɜrsē]

NOUN

1. **compassion** or **forgiveness** shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm.

synonyms:

leniency · lenience · clemency · compassion · pity · charity ·

What is the Greek meaning of Mercy?

Definition of Mercy. The Greek word that is translated as “mercy” in **Matthew 5:7** is **eleoo**. This verb occurs 28 times in the New Testament and means “**to show kindness or concern for someone in serious need**.”

What is the difference between mercy and grace?

Mercy and **grace** are closely related. While the terms have similar meanings, *grace* and *mercy* are not exactly the same. **Mercy** has to do with *kindness* and *compassion*; it is often spoken of in the context of God’s not punishing us as our sins deserve. **Grace** includes kindness and compassion, but also carries the idea of *bestowing a gift or favor*. It may help to view mercy as a subset of grace.

In Scripture, **mercy** is often equated with *a deliverance from judgment* (e.g., Deuteronomy 4:30–31; 1 Timothy 1:13), and **grace** is always *the extending of a blessing to the unworthy*.

So, summing up the meaning of *mercy*, the best way to define it is having **pity** and **compassion**. What does that look like for us, as humans?

There is a very interesting story in the Bible that exemplifies mercy. Turn to **Luke 10:25-37**, and let's read.

This is the story of **The Good Samaritan**. Who were the Samaritans?

Samaritans appear to have emerged from the intermarriage of Jews and pagans. When Assyria conquered Israel in 722 BC, they took most of its people into captivity and resettled the land with foreigners; intermarriages also took place. This group did not adhere to Jewish law — God's law — as strictly as the Pharisees did. The Samaritans were influenced by pagan traditions. They were considered **dogs**. . **half breeds**. They were the *despised* enemies of the Jews.

In **Luke 10:25**, Jesus was speaking to a Jewish lawyer, someone *well acquainted* with the history of Israel and of this long-standing enmity between the two groups. He and the rest of the audience were familiar with the fact that **Jews and Samaritans hated each other**. They would most certainly have crossed the street to avoid one another. (**John 4:1-10**)

What question does the lawyer ask Jesus in **verse 25**? And what answer does Jesus give to him in **verse 26**? In **verse 27**, the lawyer correctly answers Jesus. Read the verse and fill in the blanks:

"Thou shalt _____ the _____ thy God with all thy _____, and with all thy _____, and with all thy _____, and with all thy _____: and thy _____ as thyself."

In the Beatitudes, Christ had declared "blessed are the *merciful*, for they will be shown *mercy*" (**Matthew 5:7**). Christ's message was that if we wish to be reconciled to the Father, we must demonstrate love towards all people, regardless of race, religion, or social position.

In **verse 28**, Christ then said unto the lawyer, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

Love is **active, inconvenient, risky, and might not be reciprocated**. What if, in Jesus' parable of the **Good Samaritan**, the wounded traveler had died, or was unable to repay the Samaritan? Jesus then began to teach the people about **mercy**. He tells them the parable about the Good Samaritan. Look at **Luke 10:30**. What perils did the man go through when he went from Jerusalem to Jericho?

In **verse 31**, we notice the *first* person that passed by the man. Who was he, and what did he do to help? _____

Who do you think this person represents? _____

In **verse 32**, the *second* person passes by the man. Who was he, and what did he do to help? _____

Who do you think this person represents? _____

In **verse 33**, the *third* person passes by the man. Who was he, and what did he do to help?

Who do you think this person represents? _____

Now look at **verse 29**. What question did the lawyer ask Jesus? _____

Well-trained lawyers ask questions to which they already know the answer, and asking *what must I do to inherit eternal life?* revealed that he had *some* insight into the matter of salvation. He was knowledgeable in Hebrew law and a scholar of Jewish literature. The lawyer knew that he needed to *wholly* love God and love his neighbor, but the words had not impacted his *heart*.

Jesus' parable and the choice of a Samaritan hit the mark! Jesus invited the lawyer to scrutinize his own attitude (if honest enough to do so), and perhaps come to a better understanding of his Creator's expectation of proper social attitudes.

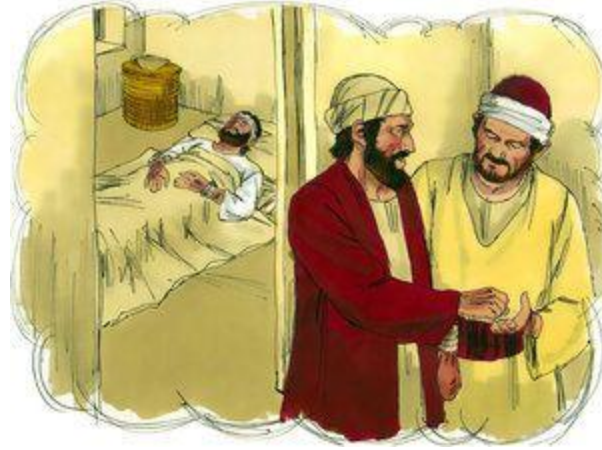
Christ appears to be saying that even someone with a distorted understanding of the law could still reflect the heart of the Father more accurately than a law-abiding Jew. "Love your neighbor as yourself:" The words fell lifeless from the lawyer's mouth, but Christ inspired them with meaning and power by illustrating how to live by them. "Be **doers** of the word and not **hearers only**, deceiving yourselves" (**James 1:22**).

You see, Christ did not specify if the "man" was a Jew, Samaritan, or what nationality he was. He is **anyone**. He is **everyone**. Jesus wants us to be moved by exceptional compassion, like Himself; love that pays no attention to skin color, wealth or the lack of it, or religion.

In **verse 33**, the *third* person passes by the man. Who do you think this third person represents? _____

The Samaritan did more than "take care of" this man. He offered care and devotion. Look at **vv. 33-35**. Write down the ways that the Samaritan cared for this man:

The man's emotional and financial investment was in a *stranger's* care. His generosity was "staggering." *His love was extravagant!!!*



The Good Samaritan did not preach compassion to the innkeeper or return for payment from the beaten man. The Samaritan *took responsibility financially and personally* and lived out a belief: That *your neighbor* is the person who needs saving. Read **Romans 5:8** and fill in the blanks:

"But God _____ His _____ towards us, in that, *while we were yet* _____, Christ _____ for us." What does *commend* mean? _____

God's love is extravagant!!

Who does this stranger represent? We who are saved were once this broken man!! And because our Lord, Jesus Christ paid the ultimate sacrifice for us on the cross of Calvary, we should be just like the Good Samaritan! We should seek out those who are lost and hurting...beaten down by sin, the world and Satan, and we should lovingly, tenderly care for their souls, because Christ was/is our example!

Read **Matthew 25:40** and fill in the blanks:

"And the King shall answer and say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have _____ it unto one of the _____ of these my _____, ye have _____ it unto _____."

Also look at Acts 9:4-5. Jesus was talking to Saul here. What had Saul been doing prior to being on the road to Damascus? What peculiar question did Jesus ask Saul? What did He mean?

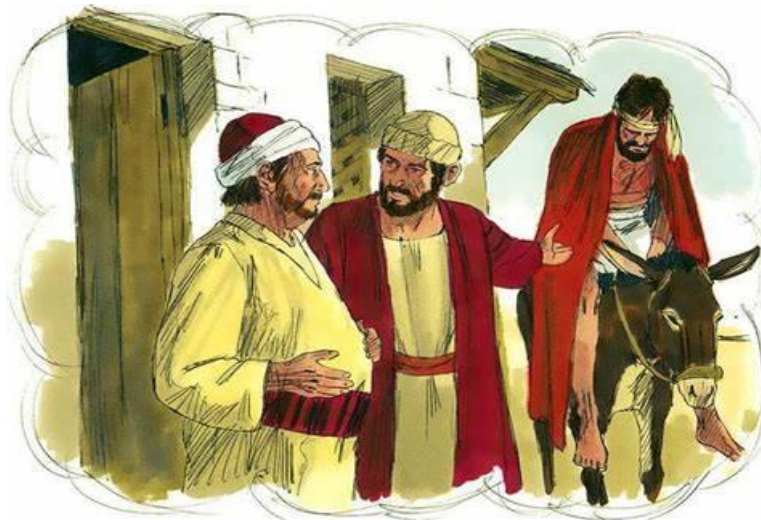
This parable foreshadows Christ's sacrifice on the cross and the free gift of grace He offers to repentant sinners. Jesus took a risk: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (**Romans 5:8**). He paid *everything* so that those who believed in Him for salvation would be saved.

The word "**splagma**" used in the original Greek means "*pity from your deepest soul.*" The Samaritan's heart was broken, reflecting a heart *for* God and the heart we receive *from* God for others when we embrace salvation through the mercy of Christ. God invites us to see beyond the exterior of lifestyle, color, and even religious affiliation. He reminds us in **Luke 10** that **we were once the same as that broken, bleeding man.**"

Read **Colossians 1:21-22** and fill in the blanks:

"And _____, that were sometime _____ and _____ in your mind by _____ works, yet now hath He _____. In the body of His _____ through _____, to _____ you _____ and _____ and unproveable (blameless), in His _____.

God asks that we meet lost people in their painful messes and lead them to the cross, risking rejection but hoping to witness their salvation. Let us, then, not be like the priest, or the Levite, but let us be like our Lord and Savior, Jesus!!!



WITHOUT PARTIALITY



partiality

[,pärSHē' alədē]

NOUN

unfair bias in favor of one thing or person compared with another; favoritism.

synonyms:

[bias](#) · [prejudice](#) · [favoritism](#) · [favor](#) · [partisanship](#) · [unfair preference](#) · [discrimination](#) · [unjustness](#) · [unfairness](#) · [inequity](#)

We've all seen it at one time or another. It may be a teacher favoring one student more than the others, whereupon all the other children dub that student a "teacher's pet", or a boss that shows special favor to an employee. Parents can be guilty of giving extra love and attention to a particular child. The star athlete has many friends, while the skinny, scrawny kid that gets all A's in every subject may be picked on and teased. The "pretty" girl gets all the dates, while the girl who has an acne problem and crooked teeth is overlooked. These are all examples of showing partiality. Partiality can and *does* hurt people!

We are studying our sixth pillar of wisdom, *without partiality*. Why do you think that God felt it so important to include in **James 3:17**? Does it make a difference how people are treated **by us**? Does it make a difference to Jesus how people treat other people? It certainly does!

It's hard to believe, but according to people who study these things, first-time guests to your church make up their minds whether they're coming back or not in the first 10 minutes of their visit. **Think about that.** Before they hear the first note of music, before they hear the first word of a sermon or before anyone stands up and says "welcome" in the service, most first-time guests have already made a conscious or subconscious decision about whether they're coming back. What might be hanging in the balance is someone's opportunity to embrace Jesus. Often the barrier to Christ isn't spiritual—it's us.

There are some very interesting verses in James that warn against partiality, especially in church! Let's read **James 2:2-4** and fill in the blanks:

"For if there _____ unto your _____ a man with a _____ ring, in goodly _____, and there come in also a _____ man in _____ raiment; And ye have _____ to him that weareth the gay _____, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a _____ place; and say to the poor, _____ thou there, or sit here _____ my footstool: Are ye not then _____ in yourselves, and are become _____ of _____ thoughts?"

The Bible tells us in **Galatians 3:28**, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." The Bible also tells us in **Romans 2:11**, "For there is no respect of persons with God." He loves us all equally. He died for us all. **John 3:16** tells us, "For God so loved the WORLD that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The world. . .every single person, past, present and future!

Think about this: in **Acts 10:34-35** it says, "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that **God is no respecter of persons**: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." and in **Revelation 7:9-10**, the Bible says, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of **all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues**, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." There is no respecter of persons with God!

Read **Romans 10:12** and fill in the blanks: "For there is no _____ between the _____ and the _____: for the same _____ over _____ is _____ unto all that _____ upon _____." Paul's charge to Timothy in **1 Timothy 5:21** was, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." Partiality was forbidden!

Partiality Can Tear a Family Apart!

We all are familiar with the story of Joseph in Genesis. Read **Genesis 37:3** and fill in the blanks: "Now Israel _____ Joseph _____ than all his _____, because he was the _____ of his _____ age: and he _____ him a _____ of _____."

Joseph's brothers were not happy about the fact that their father **avored** him and they grew to deeply resent him. **Genesis 37:4** says, "But when **his brothers** saw that their father loved him more than all **his brothers**, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him."

We must be very careful in our own family, not to favor one child over another. We must be very careful not to praise one child's accomplishments and not the other's. We know the story of Joseph. We understand that in **chapter 50, verse 20 of Genesis**, the Bible explains that everything that Joseph went through God meant it for good---to save many people. But, we do see how the favoritism of Israel for Joseph caused hatred in his brothers towards him. We must be very careful that we do not have a "favorite." It breeds bitterness!

We can also read in Genesis 25:28, "And Isaac love Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob." Also in **Genesis 29:30**, "And he, (Jacob), went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years. And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren."



think about it . . .

have you ever been in a situation where partiality hurt you?

have you ever been guilty of being partial?

Pastor Jeremiah Steeppek (pictured below) transformed himself into a homeless person and went to the 10,000 member church that he was to be introduced as the head pastor at that morning. He walked around his soon to be church for 30 minutes while it was filling with people for service....only 3 people out of the 7-10,000 people said hello to him. He asked people for change to buy food... NO ONE in the church gave him change. He went into the sanctuary to sit down in the front of the church and was asked by the ushers if he would please sit in the back. He greeted people to be greeted back with stares and dirty looks, with people looking down on him and judging him. As he sat in the back of the church, he listened to the church announcements and such. When all that was done, the elders went up and were excited to introduce the new pastor of the church to the congregation...."We would like to introduce to you Pastor Jeremiah Steeppek"... The congregation looked around clapping with joy and anticipation.....The homeless man sitting in the back stood up... and started walking down the aisle... the clapping stopped with ALL eyes on him.... he walked up the altar and took the microphone from the elders (who were in on this) and paused for a moment.... then he recited "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" After he recited this, he looked towards the congregation and told them all what he had experienced that morning... many began to cry and many heads were bowed in shame... he then said... Today I

see a gathering of people... not a church of Jesus Christ. The world has enough people, but not enough disciples... when will YOU decide to become disciples? He then dismissed service until next week... Being a Christian is more than something you claim. It's something you live by and share with others.

WITHOUT HYPOCRISY

The Bible tells us that a hypocrite is **someone who puts on a mask and pretends to be something he is not**. Hypocrisy is to claim to know and follow certain beliefs but to behave in a way that counteracts those beliefs.

In essence, “hypocrisy” refers to the act of *claiming to believe something but acting in a different manner*. The word is derived from the Greek term for “actor”—literally, “one who wears a mask”—in other words, *someone who pretends to be what he is not*.

Read **Isaiah 29:13** and fill in the blanks:

"Wherefore the _____ said, Forasmuch as this _____ draw near me with their _____, and with their _____ do _____ me, but have removed their _____ far from me, and their _____ toward me is _____ by the precept of men."

Centuries later, Jesus quoted this verse, aiming the same condemnation at the religious leaders of His day in **Matthew 15:8-9**. In **Matthew 7:15**, what did Jesus call false prophets? _____ And in **Matthew 23:27**, what did Jesus compare the scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites with? _____. In **Matthew 23:33**, He called them _____ and _____, and added, "*how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*"



The Bible calls hypocrisy a **sin**. There are two forms hypocrisy can take: that of *professing belief in something and then acting in a manner contrary to that belief*, and that of *looking down on others when we ourselves are flawed*.

Let's read **Romans 12:9** together. "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." **DISSIMULATION** means: **to make like; like**. The act of dissembling; *a hiding under a false appearance*; a **feigning**; false pretension; hypocrisy. Dissimulation may be simple concealment of the opinions, sentiments or purpose; but it includes also the assuming of a false or counterfeit appearance which conceals the real opinions or purpose. Notice the word, "feigning?" We've talked about this word before. For clarity, let's look at the definition.



Feign

To pretend.

Let's read **Luke 20:19-20** together:

"And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them. And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should **FEIGN** themselves *just men*, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor."

In **Acts 23:15**, the Jews plotted to kill Paul. In fact, they banded together and bound themselves by a curse, saying that they would not eat or drink until they killed him. In **verse 15**, after they had come to the chief priest and elders, they told them to bring him, (Paul) down tomorrow, *and act as though they would enquire something "more perfectly" concerning him*, and when he would come near, they would be ready to kill him! What, exactly, were they "feigning" in this verse? _____



Luke 18:9-14

There is a story in **Luke 18** that exemplifies the meaning of "feign." Let's read **verses 9-14** together.

In **verse 9**, what words or phrases do you see that indicate feigning? _____

In **verse 10**, the Bible describes the two men as a _____ and a _____

In **verses 11-12**, what words did the Pharisee say? _____

In **verse 13**, what did the publican say? _____

Now, let's read Jesus' response together in **verse 14**. What caution does Jesus give to all of us in this verse? _____

Read **1 Corinthians 10:12** and fill in the blanks:

"Wherefore let _____ that _____ he _____
take _____ lest he fall."



We can read another account of Jesus condemning the practice of hypocrisy in **Matthew 6:1-8**. Let's read it together.

In **verse 1**, what are alms?

What does Jesus tell us NOT to do with our alms in **verses 2-4**?

In **verse 5**, what does Jesus teach that the hypocrites do when they pray?

In **verse 6**, Jesus teaches us to do what when we pray?

In **verse 7**, what are we NOT to do when we pray?

In **verse 8**, who are we NOT to be like?

Jesus also warns us NOT to be like the hypocrites in **Matthew 6:16-18**. In this account they are fasting. What things do they do that displease Jesus? At the end of **verse 16**, what does Jesus say about this display of hypocrisy? In **verse 17-18**, what does Jesus teach US about how we should go about fasting?

Peter included hypocrisy as one of the attitudes Christians should avoid in **1 Peter 2:1**.

Paul warned Timothy about hypocritical false teachers in **1 Timothy 4:1-2**. In **2 Corinthians 6**, Paul speaks of his sufferings for Christ, and the consistent life he lived. In **verse 6**, he mentions that his love was *unfeigned*. . .or not with hidden agendas! In **1 Peter 1**, Peter is exhorting Christians to godliness. In **verse 22**, he talks about their unfeigned love of the brethren...exhorting them to, "*love one another with a pure heart fervently.*" Paul also talks about loving our of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith *unfeigned*, in **1 Timothy:1:5**.

To reiterate, "*hypocrisy*" refers to *the act of claiming to believe something but acting in a different manner*. The word is derived from the Greek term for "*actor*"—literally, "*one who wears a mask*"—in other words, someone who pretends to be what he is not.

Jesus consistently used the scribes and Pharisees as examples of *what NOT to do!* We touched on some verses in **Matthew 23**, but let's look at the entire chapter. We are going to learn some very important things that Jesus taught against. This chapter will teach us many things about hypocrisy.

In **verse 2**, what was Moses' seat?

In **verse 3**, what does Jesus exhort us to do? To NOT do?

In **verse 4**, how do the scribes and Pharisees expect of other people? Do they do these things themselves?

In **verse 5**, why do the scribes and Pharisees do what they do? What are phylacteries?

In **verse 6**, Where do they love to be?

In **verse 7**, in the marketplace, what do they love to be called?

In **verse 8-10**, Who alone is to be called Rabbi, Master, Father?

In **verse 11**, what important thing do we learn about Jesus?

In **verse 12**, Jesus cautions what will happen to those that exalt themselves. What is it?

Let's look at **verses 13-39** now and take note of the things the scribes and Pharisees did that was hypocritical.

What have you personally learned from one or more of these verses?

True righteousness comes from the inner transformation of the Holy Spirit not an external conformity to a set of rules. We are not to go around looking for fault in others when we have our own to deal with. **Matthew 7:1-5** talks about why would we be so concerned with the mote that is in our brother's eye, but we don't even consider the beam that is in our own eye? In **verse 5** of that chapter, Jesus says, "Thou *hypocrite*, first cast out the beam out of your own eye; and then shall you see clearly to cast out the mote out of your brother's eye." In **verse 12**, we read what we know as The Golden Rule, "Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so them them: for this is the law and the prophets."

We can't go around making up rules to hang around other people's necks that are not even in the Bible! That's what the Pharisees and scribes did! And Jesus didn't like it! He spoke against it! He called them *hypocrites*! Let's be careful that we are not being hypocritical! Let us be unfeigned in our words, our intentions, our love for others, our thoughts. . .everything. Let's not be like whitewashed tombs. . .white and gleaming on the outside, but full of dead man's bones on the inside. (**Matthew 23:27-28**)

In conclusion, **1 Timothy 1:5** tells us, "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith *unfeigned*." and in **2 Timothy 1:5**, Paul says something very encouraging to Timothy, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that is in you also."

Unfeigned. . .without hypocrisy. Pure. Honest. Honoring to God. It's what God wants for us. It should be what WE want for ourselves in our walk with God. Let's be a Lois. Let's be a Eunice. Let's have that trickle down to those around us. To our children, grandchildren, women at church, women at work. . .to everyone!



