

The Keys Of The Kingdom

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If you would like to be a guest writer for TKOK you may contact me at jfmiller61@gmail.com.

To announce up coming events like Gospel Meetings, Lectures, Singing events etc... Just use the email link above to contact me. Please feel free to tell others and have them pick up their copy today. Use this link to direct them to our page. http://jfmiller.com/keysofthekingdom/?page_id=1316 .

May God Bless You. Jim and the Staff

Editor's Notes



New live bible classes started Sept. 28th. Each Thursday evening starting at 6pm.
Click the link below to learn more.

<http://jfmiller.com/onlineclass>

New Release

Back on November 27th of 2015 I published the book "The Journey" How Larry Became A Christian. I was published first as a Kindle book. On December 21st of 2016 I published it as a paperback. This book was written in story format to teach others how to become a Christian and be added to the Lord's church. My intent and hope was and still is that this book would be passed along as a gift or used as a teaching tool to bring others to Christ. I have just published the companion book "The Journey Continues" The Christian Life (Faithful Unto Death). This book teaches the new Christian what is necessary to do to stay in a saved condition and inherit a home in heaven. On the next page you will find links to both books in Kindle and paperback format. These would make valuable gifts for your loved one's or friends this Xmas or at anytime for that matter. Please feel free to go check them out and may God richly bless you.

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A Little Leaven

Jim Miller
Gray, Maine

Paul wrote: It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us (1 Cor. 5:1–7).

These words of Paul are as true today as they were when he first wrote them. Today we could ask the question, “Can a person or church be just a little liberal/progressive?” I submit to you that the answer should be a resounding, NO! Yet this is what far too many people believe. We all know Satan was the first liberal/progressive and it is clear what he did in the Beginning. Today, that same “leaven” he used in the garden is still alive and well. We see this leaven all over the place; it permeates our society, creeps into our congregations, and destroys all it touches.

People have been taught for many years that they must be weak to be meek and to always be tolerant of others sins. This has become the bane of all mankind.

The lies and false doctrines of men have taken the place of scripture. It is not going to stop till people wake up and take a stand for the truth. We can't go on thinking that since we are doing right so we are safe. Our purpose here is to bring others to the truth and the saving grace of Christ. The problem is that most Christians fear ridicule and/or being ostracized for taking a stand for the truth. We are told that we must change with the times and be more accepting of the changes men want to make, not just in our worship, but also in our work of saving souls.

The myth that true love is merely some touchy-feely, emotional experience—and is to be accepted in place of Biblical love—has been foisted on the church for many years. It is just more of the leaven the false teachers among us have propagated. Over the years people have been conditioned to think that love will not allow rebuke and chastisement. Christians are often accused of lacking love when they are willing to rebuke or reprove those committing sin, but in fact, it is because of love for the sinner's soul that we do so. One way God shows his love for His children is by chastening (Heb. 12:6), and parents do the same (Pro. 13:24). True love necessitates chastisement. It will not compromise truth or overlook wrong.

These flatterers or compromisers of today are the ones who lack love. They are mostly interested in themselves. Today the leaven of the liberal/progressive will tell you that love will not permit us to hate. They say, "If one hates, he doesn't love." The Bible however, teaches that we are to hate certain things. The Psalmist said, "I hate every false way" (Psa. 119:104). Christ hates iniquity (Heb. 1:9) and false doctrine (Rev. 2:15). Solomon said of God, "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him" (Pro. 6:16). Yet, God is love (1 John 4:8). Others will tell you that love will overrule obedience: "If we love God with all our heart, He will overlook a lack of strict obedience to his will." This idea is the foundation of the leaven of the liberal/progressive. Christians know that strict obedience is the way we show our love. John wrote, "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected..." (1 John 2:5). Genuine love produces obedience. One who will not obey does not love as he ought to love. These folks conventionally forget that God is a God of severity as well as a God of goodness (Rom. 11:22). All kinds of liberal leaven are dressed up as "love."

The liberal mindset reasons that surely a good work is exempt from the need for authority; as a so-called "good work" it stands on its own. In fact, that belief is

akin to situation ethics. People in general—and many in the church—sometimes ask the question, "Isn't this a good work?" That all depends on where we get our definition of "good," and whether the alleged "good work" is "mixed with faith" (Heb. 4:2)—a faith that comes "by hearing the word of God" (Rom. 10:17)—or is mixed with "evil, that good may come" (Rom. 3:8). God never puts us in the position of having to disobey Him in order to obey Him. We are never put in a situation where our only alternative is to mix good works with iniquity (i.e., lawlessness).

Take King Saul as an example: Was it a "good work" to voluntarily offer animal sacrifices under the Mosaic Law? Saul not only offered sacrifices unto God, but he offered "the best of the sheep and of the oxen" (1 Sam. 15:15). Yet, Samuel said his "good work" constituted "rebellion...witchcraft...stubbornness...iniquity, and idolatry" (v. 23). Saul thus allowed his "good" to be "evil spoken of" (cf. Rom. 14:16)—because his optional voluntary offering involved a violation of a direct God-given obligation.

The same practice is still true today, and it takes many forms such as musical instruments, choirs, solo singers, and many others, such as church yard sales, bake sales, and all kinds of fund raising events—and this just scratches the surface. Jesus said that in the Judgment many would claim to have done "many wonderful works" in His name, but that He would regard them as workers of iniquity (Mat. 7:21–23). God's people are under the same restrictions as those which we bind upon the religious world when it comes to "good works." Many seem to have forgotten that the Scriptures will furnish us completely "unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

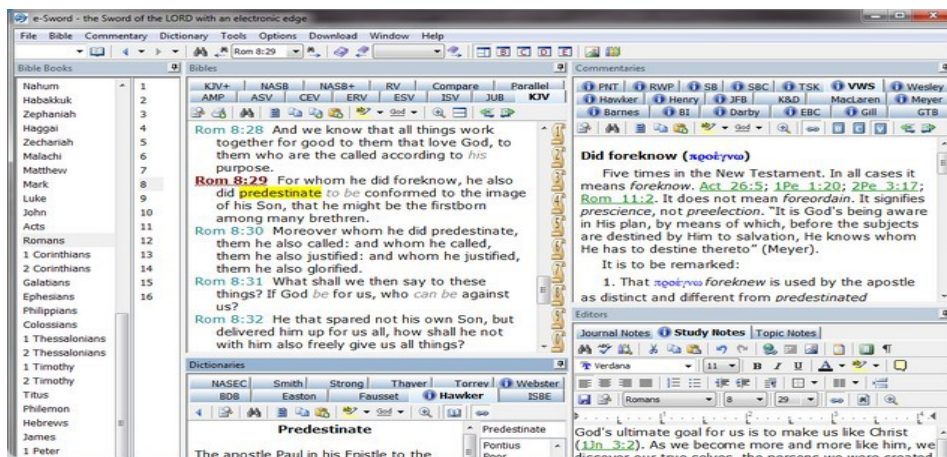
This brings us to the leaven of situation ethics. Situation ethics is a philosophy that teaches that sin may be acceptable, or at least, overlooked by God under certain specific situations. The philosophy says that one may be placed in a situation where he must choose between the lesser of two evils. Those in the secular world would not view either choice as sin, but the child of God would readily see the sin involved. It needs to be understood that God has already determined the way that we should go in any and every situation and He has not given man the authority to change that way based upon any particular situation. It is always wrong to do wrong and right to do right. Choosing the right course may produce hardships, but God has promised to carry us through those hard times (Heb. 13:5–6). The liberal/progressive will tell you that human reason and logic—not the Word of God should determine our action. As Christians we dare

not depend upon our own reasonings because God has revealed the truth (John 8:32). No matter the situation we may find ourselves in, we can always trust that God is able and will provide a way of escape without our yielding to sin (1 Cor. 10:32). You see, dear reader, that the leaven of the false teacher and his damnable doctrines can filter in among us and metastasize just like a cancer—destroying all that it touches.

We will continue this study in our next edition.

Till Next We Meet
God Bless

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***Commentary On And Review Of
k.C. Moser's
The Way Of Salvation And The Gist Of Romans
Part 3***

*Dub McClish
Denton, Texas*

As previously mentioned, in 1964 F.W. Mattox, president of Lubbock Christian College and long-time friend of Moser's, called him out of retirement to join the school's Bible faculty. His eight years at that school gave him countless opportunities to influence preacher students as well as countless other young people. His tenure there also gave him new credibility and a new platform for his errors. Hicks reports an interview with the late Jim Massey (reputed to be an exponent of "all grace, no law"), fellow teacher with Moser at LCC. Massey told Hicks that Moser, because of his doctrinal emphasis, was referred to as "the Baptist preacher" on the Bible faculty by his fellow teachers—which I would agree was very near accurate, but far short of amusing.

The Dormant Seeds Sprout

Seeds can lie dormant for years or even centuries, awaiting just the right conditions to germinate and spring to life. This power is in the Gospel seed (Luke 8:11), and, unfortunately, in the seed of error as well. In his book, *Distant Voices: Discovering a Forgotten Past for a Changing Church*, C. Leonard Allen avers: "The efforts of Moser stand directly behind some of the theological shifts occurring among contemporary Churches of Christ" (169). Allen, a vocal change agent and an advocate of the *Man-over-the-plan* credo, should know—as I believe he does.

This being so, to read Moser is to read source material for some of the wild and heretical statements concerning grace among us over the past forty-plus years. Compare the following statements with some of Moser's (and Bogard's!) quotes and emphases referenced above (Dodson 114):

Nobody has any right to preach anything other than the Gospel of pure

grace. We are saved by grace plus nothing. You are saved by faith period. There is nothing you can do to be saved (1982, the late Glen Owen, at the time an elder, Highland Church of Christ, Abilene, TX).

If one is to be saved, it must be totally by grace.... I was brought up on the “Christian duty” concept. All facets of discipleship became one’s duty. And when a person forsook the Lord, he was “out of duty.” Such a concept is foreign to the New Testament (1984, the late Cecil Hook, author, *Free in Christ*).

Why are we afraid of grace? Why must grace always be explained?... Are we focusing upon God’s grace or man’s performance?... Too many believe, “Do your best and God will do the rest.” This is blasphemy, but it dies hard.... Any retreat to law is a denial of grace.... Grace and law are mutually exclusive (1984, Charles Hodge, author, *Amazing Grace*).

I believe deeply that the New Testament teaches that salvation is a free gift of God period. You are saved by grace alone (1989, Randy Mayeux, at the time with Preston Road Church of Christ, Dallas, TX, but later left and started his own denomination).

At the heart of my own belief is the conviction that we are saved by grace. What do I mean by this statement?... There is no human part of salvation! (1991, Randy Mayeux).

It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation (1990, Rubel Shelly, preacher, Family of God at Woodmont Hills, Nashville, TN).

Our salvation arises entirely and only from grace.... It is entirely of grace through faith.... My salvation is on grace alone. Not by anything I’ve added to it. He didn’t do 98% of it and I have to add 2%... (1991, Rubel Shelly).

To say that we are saved by Christ’s work plus our work is to suggest

that the work of Christ at the cross was inadequate. To say that God does 99% and we do 1% undermines what Christ did at the cross (1991, Denny Boultinghouse, then editor, Image Magazine; he obviously took sorry notes on Shelly's foregoing pronouncements).

I spent too many years of my Christian life not knowing what grace was. The only thing I knew for sure was that "we" didn't believe in it.... We are saved by grace plus nothing.... God does it all.... We keep trying to place conditions on our receiving it (1991, Jim Hackney, Midtown [now Heritage] Church of Christ, Fort Worth, TX).

[Grace is] the only thing that does save you.... Our works have nothing to do with our salvation (1991, Randy Fenter, then preacher at MacArthur Park Church of Christ, San Antonio, TX).

Salvation is not a human achievement but the free gift of God.... Can you see that there is absolutely nothing you can do to heal our alienation? (1992, Bill Love, author, *The Core Gospel: On Restoring the Crux of the Matter*).

Response and Conclusion

No one can believe the Bible and not believe in salvation by grace. However, no person who ever lived or ever will live will ever be able to find even a hint of "grace only" doctrine in Scripture as some now teach, though some of them may have seventeen terminal degrees. While contemporary change agents got it from Moser and his generation, Moser did not originate it. Its roots reach all the way back to John Calvin's theology in the sixteenth century, whose roots go all the way back to Augustine in the fourth century.

If salvation is by grace alone, then why are not all saved? God wills that all men be saved (1 Tim. 2:4), and His saving grace has appeared to all men (Tit. 2:11). Yet, the Lord said that few will be saved (Mat. 7:13–14). As Whiteside described Moser's doctrine, the *grace-only* doctrine quoted above is little more than thinly disguised universalism.

Some of the liberals, unlike strict Calvinists, at least concede (in their modified, semi-Calvinism) the requirement of faith in the sinner. However, by stating the necessity of the “work” of belief (as the Lord thus labeled it, John 6:28–29, though Moser denies it), they unravel their entire *grace only-no works-no conditions-no law* heresy. To allow even one condition undercuts their *grace-only* premise utterly.

One verges on irrationality to contend simultaneously for two “exclusive” factors of salvation. One who says in the same breath that salvation is “by grace plus nothing,” then adds “by faith period,” and further pontificates that “there is nothing you can do to be saved” needs a caregiver. *Grace plus nothing* excludes faith. *Faith period* excludes grace.

I saw a denominational billboard a few years ago with three statements on it:

GRACE ONLY!
FAITH ONLY!
SCRIPTURE ONLY!

Although I laughed when I saw it, in truth, these words expressed a tragic misconception and impossibility. One expects such from Protestant denominational sources, for it has been their stock-in-trade since Luther and Calvin. However, I am still shocked when those who are members of churches of Christ preach such heresy. Salvation is neither by grace only nor by faith only; and if one takes Scripture only he will know better than to spout either of the former salvation “only” claims.

The charges are false that any faithful saint is “afraid of grace,” that we do not believe in it, or that we do not understand, preach, or emphasize it. All who preach “the whole counsel of God” both believe in it and preach it. Every sermon that mentions the Christ, the church, the cross, inspiration, repentance, Heaven, Hell, and even baptism and the law of Christ, declares and emphasizes the grace of God. Rather than excluding all of the foregoing (and many other matters, including works of obedience on our part), God’s grace and mercy **includes** them. The problem liberals have with faithful brethren is not that we do not preach “grace,” but that we do not preach their **perversion** of it.

Scriptural dogma includes “the Man **and** the plan.” Men who choose one in favor of the other digress and will soon be apostates if they do not repent. Our

Lord, by self-imposed limitation, cannot/does not save apart from His plan (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 20:32; Rom 1:16; 2 The. 1:7–9; Tit. 2:11–3:5; et al.). Likewise, the plan is but a lifeless, powerless, human instrument apart from the crucified, risen, enthroned Savior. There is no such thing as “grace-only” salvation unless one concedes the existence of universal salvation. God’s grace which brings salvation is “free” in that we cannot earn or merit it. However, it is not free from the standpoint of God-given conditions men must meet to receive it. Paul’s summation of God’s great plan cannot be improved upon: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love” (Gal. 5:6).

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NOTE: All Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

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Note: This MS was written for and an oral digest of delivered at the Spring, Texas Church of Christ Contending for the Faith Lectures, February 28–March 3, 2010. It was published in full in the lectureship book, *Profiles in Apostasy No. 1*, ed. David Brown.



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A Spiritually Deadly Epidemic

*Jerry C. Brewer
Elk City, OK*

There are only three classes of persons who may marry, according to the Scriptures. They are 1) those who have never been married (Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 7:28), 2) those who have been married but whose spouses have died (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39) and 3) those who have been married but are divorced because of their spouses' fornication (Matt. 19:9). Though all persons in these classes are permitted to marry, they are permitted to do so only within the parameters of God's law.

So important is the home of one woman, one man and their children to an orderly society that God intends for that relationship to continue for the lives of all involved. Marriage is "until death do us part," and neither man nor legislative fiat has a right to allow a man and woman to divorce for every cause. In tandem with the neglect of children by working mothers who are married, the epidemic of divorce is also destroying the moral fabric of our states. Not only is divorce routinely permitted for any cause under the sun, but it is celebrated and extolled in popular culture. Once upon a time, in a world that no longer exists, children in Longfellow Grade School in Elk City, Okla. read stories of a family consisting of a father, mother, and three children named Dick, Jane, and Sally. Those stories not only taught us to read, but imparted the ancient verities of a family structured after God's pattern, familial love, honesty, truthfulness, and fidelity to each other.

But somewhere along the path we have traveled in the past seven decades, Dick and Jane were slowly put to death. God's family structure that they confirmed in our young minds eroded into single-parent entities of popular culture like My Three Sons as social engineers in the 1960s began telling us to "do your own thing." The selflessness of Dick and Jane and Sally's family was replaced with self-obsession as we began a cultural and moral descent through Eddie's Father of the 70s which culminated in Murphy Brown's child born of fornication in the 90s. What killed Dick and Jane? The answer is found in the rejection of God's order for the home which was, and continues to be, fueled by parents who want

to “find themselves” by sacrificing their families on the altar of divorce for any cause.

There Is Only One God-Ordained Reason For Divorce

Divorce for every cause has caused misery untold in our society and continues unabated at an accelerated pace. Statistically, the highest divorce rates in the nation are in the South where we have always been known as “The Bible Belt.” That is now a misnomer for our region. Our states have sown the wind of easy divorce and are reaping the whirlwind of a crumbling, decadent society. Oklahoma is among the worst with the second highest divorce rate among the 50 states. That prompted Governor Frank Keating to say in 2001 that it was “easier for Oklahomans to get out of a marriage than a Tupperware contract.”

1 Citing federal figures in 1999, the Associated Press reported that “there were about 4.2 divorces for every thousand people in 1998. That rate was 8.5 per thousand in Nevada, 6.4 in Tennessee, 6.1 in Arkansas, and 6.0 in Alabama and Oklahoma.”

2 God joins a man and a woman together as husband and wife when they marry according to the law of the land, and no human law can dissolve that bond. Only God can do so and He declares that fornication is the only reason He allows for one to divorce and marry another. That is found in Matthew 19:3-9 when the Pharisees put a question to him about a man putting “away his wife for every cause.” The Pharisees weren’t interested in the truth concerning marriage. They only sought to entrap Jesus, placing Him in opposition to one of two schools of thought, then extant, concerning divorce.

The school of Hillel taught that a man might divorce his wife for any reason, for any slight offense, or merely for his dislike of her person or manners; they based their opinions on Deut. 24:1, which says, ‘If she find no favor in his eyes,’ then he may ‘write her a bill of divorcement and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.’ The opposite school of Shammai allowed divorce only for adultery; this school based its decision on the same scripture (Deut. 24:1) which says, ‘Because he hath found some unseemly thing in her,’ which they interpreted as the sin of adultery. If Jesus answered this question in the negative, He opposed the school of Hillel and would incur their enmity; but if He answered in the affirmative, He would incur the enmity of the school of Shammai. 3

In His reply, Jesus aligned Himself with neither school but directed their attention to the creation of man and reaffirmed God's law of marriage which has never been abrogated. ...Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (Matt. 19:4-6).

God made man as male and female "at the beginning" and intends that husband and wife remain married for the duration of their earthly lives. Jesus further emphasized that no divorce is allowed, except for the sin of fornication, and to divorce and remarry for any other cause is to enter into a state of adultery. Despite the legal maneuvering of modern Pharisees, any divorce and subsequent remarriage by either party, for a cause other than fornication, constitutes an adulterous union. One who divorces his wife, "except it be for fornication," and marries another becomes an adulterer. He who marries her thus put away also becomes an adulterer because, in God's sight, he is living with another man's wife. The woman also becomes an adulteress because she is living with a man who isn't her husband under God's law. That means there may be four people living in adultery from one divorce, because of the laws and license of a secular/humanist civil government. Only fornication can break the marriage bond and give the guiltless party the right to remarry in the sight of God. That's what Jesus said in Matthew 19:9 and He does not allow for the remarriage of the guilty party. Hence, when a man divorces his wife for any reason other than fornication and marries another he and the woman he marries enter into a spiritually deadly state of adultery that leads to hell.

Easy divorce laws springing from the secular humanism of our present age have created a nation of adulterers and wreaked havoc upon American homes where multitudes now live in such unions. God's law of marriage was made for man's good — a fact that should be obvious considering the misery that broken homes have brought to our communities. Children today have a mother in one place, a father in another, stepparents, step-grandparents, half and step-siblings, and bickering, selfish relatives who add to the confusion. Then one wonders what is wrong with the younger generation! What is wrong is the abdication of parental responsibility by self-seeking, pseudo-adults who are more concerned with "finding themselves" and sating their own lusts than caring for the children they brought into the world. Adherence to God's law of marriage by repudiating legalized adultery would remedy much of the misery suffered by children today.

I am no prophet, nor the son of one, but there is another grave consequence that I can foresee resulting from serial polygamy in a series of cohabitation by the unmarried and divorce and remarriage. Many of these unions result in the production of children who are of differing lineages. A woman may shack up with five or six different men and have children by them all. A person who is divorced and remarried multiple times may have children in the same way. It may not occur in my lifetime, but in the future these dysfunctional families, with disjointed offspring, having no knowledge of their lineage, may easily form incestuous unions. The result will be a generation of mentally and physically infirm humans—the fruit and consequence of today’s “if-it-feels-good-do-it” generation. God’s order of one man and one woman who are married for life is not only for the good of the present generation, but for all future generations to come.

End Notes

All Bible references are from the King James Version.

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Medical Ethics

Part 2

*Michael Hatcher
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SACREDNESS OF THE FAMILY UNIT

On the sixth day of creation, God created man. In seeing His crowning of creation, God said, “*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him*” (Gen. 2:18). God makes all the animals pass before Adam so he could name them, “but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him” (2:20). Therefore God made for man the woman. “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man” (2:21-22). In bringing the woman to the man, God was sanctioning the marriage relationship. God still joins together an eligible man and woman in the bonds of holy matrimony: “And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mat. 19:5-6).

Almost no serious thinking person denies the importance of the home. There is an old adage that says, “As the home goes, so goes the nation.” One changed it to say: “As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the world in which we live.” Throughout the Bible, God was concerned with the home and continually gave instructions for the home. After making the valid point that the “ultimate thrust of the home is spiritual” (220), Wayne Jackson gave five benefits of the family unit:

(1) It provides an atmosphere of companionship (Genesis 2:18). (2) It is that sphere wherein the sexual appetites of the body can be morally satisfied (1 Corinthians 7:2). (3) It stabilizes social relationships and enhances international solidarity. (4) It is the divinely planned method of introducing children into the world (Genesis 4:1; 1 Timothy 5:14). (5) The family unit was planned to provide a warm atmosphere of love and trust—an ideal environment for spiritual growth (221).

The importance of the home is why marriage is to be for life. Man is not to put it asunder. Divorce is contrary to God’s Will. Jesus states, “Whosoever shall put

away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery” (Mark 10:11-12). The general rule is that if one divorces their mate and marries someone else, they continue to commit adultery. God did allow one and only one exception to this law and this is if the marriage partner commits fornication, then the non-fornicator can divorce the fornicator and marry again without committing adultery. “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Mat. 19:9). Thus, we see that God views the home and family unit something that is sacred. Anything that attempts to circumvent the home and family is morally wrong and must be opposed.

INTENT

Intent is vital in so many areas. Our legal system recognizes intent. When one takes the life of another, intent is always considered. If one intends to take another’s life, then they are dealt with very differently than the person who accidentally takes the life of another while doing something illegal and the person who is doing something legal. In the medical ethics realm, some of the procedures will be deemed moral or immoral based upon one’s intent. Some moral items, however, would never be right under any circumstances or intent of those involved. (Ethics are not situational, and they are not autonomous as Humanism teaches.) However, there are some medical procedures that might not be wrong of itself, but if the intent of the person doing it is violates the principles previously noted, then the procedure is wrong.

APPLICATION

While we certainly cannot cover every medical situation that might arise, yet we can show some applications of the previous principles and thus help us to understand how we relate these principles to what might come about.

Sanctity of Human Life

Abortion is morally wrong. As noted previously, life is sacred from the moment of conception, and God views the life in the womb as He does outside the womb—there is no difference. Abortion is the taking of innocent human life and is thus murder.

In vitro fertilization is a process where human eggs are fertilized in a test tube

(glass dishes) and then transferred to the female and babies brought to term. However, in the process, numerous additional fertilized eggs are sacrificially destroyed—aborted. Thus this process, in spite of its good intent to help a couple that has not been able to conceive to have a baby, is wrong and must be avoided. However, even if scientists were able to achieve this process without sacrificially destroying any fertilized eggs does not immediately mean they should do so. God has designed a method for the conception of babies. Man must be careful of bypassing God’s design.

Since euthanasia is discussed in another chapter, we will not spend time on it but to say simply that there is nothing wrong with allowing the death process to take place (often called passive euthanasia), but it is wrong to actively do something to cause the death to happen (called active euthanasia).

Honor Of Man

We have previously noted that our Lord endorsed the principle of going to a physician and taking medication for the body. With this endorsement we would find that inoculations, surgery, artificial organs, and organ transplants are all morally acceptable. Some have objected to blood transfusions based upon the prohibition of not eating blood in Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 7:26, and Acts 15:28-29. However, a blood transfusion is not eating blood and there is no prohibition against a transfusion.

However, modern technology has gone far beyond these types of actions. First there is the category of Genetic Engineering that is taking place. In 1953 two British scientists (James Watson and Francis Crick) discovered DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). Located along the chromosomes of the living cell, DNA is composed of four chemicals that are arranged in an infinite variety of patterns that form the genes. Depending on the particular code the development of this material produced a worm, mouse, cow, etc. Each human cell contains 46 chromosomes that are tiny packages of DNA. The order of arrangement forms the “blueprint” that regulates the production of all living things. Each one of the billions of cells in the human body contains all of the genetic information for the production of the entire person.

Scientists have been able to “map” genes (gene or genome mapping) and thus determine, in part, what their specific functions are. The Human Genome Project (an international scientific research project) has done an amazing amount of work in this area having been able to map approximately 20,000-25,000 genes from both a physical and functional standpoint. Mapping might be

profitable for plants and animals, yet might present some problems regarding humans. We must all remember that God has designed man and man must not try to *play God*.

Genetic testing or screening (some like the U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment distinguishes between the two) can possibly detect hereditary problems before birth. This can be valuable in treating diseases and problems before they can cause problems. However, it can also be used to identify problems in an unborn child to allow the parents to abort the baby (especially if there is a disease for which there is no known cure).

Genetic testing or screening leads to genetic engineering. Genetic engineering is an attempt to manipulate the code of the hereditary pattern by the introduction of new genetic information into the cells. There are two types of engineering: germline gene therapy that would alter the traits a child is born with and make them inheritable, and somatic cell gene therapy that swaps our bad genes for good ones. Engineering can very possibly have great beneficial results. It might be able to eliminate many diseases such as Cystic fibrosis, sickle-cell anemia, dwarfism, cardiomyopathy, diabetes, et al. However, we do not know what dangers might be involved in trying to accomplish these things. Additionally, it becomes very easy to go from repairing something that is wrong to attempting to play God (i.e., curing dwarfism to creating a race of giants).

There is also the attempt being made to control the mind. There are various ways in which they desire to accomplish this control: genetic bank, electrical stimulation of the brain (some call it transistorized humans), chemical control, and psychosurgery. Human conduct should not be controlled by these types of things but by moral persuasion and reason leading to the person making moral decisions to change to practicing self-control under the will of God.

To view man as a mere animal to be experimented with (a kind of Dr. Frankenstein-like scientist) to create or redesign the human being the bounds of morality has been crossed; it violates the dignity of man, usurping the creative prerogatives of God.

Sacredness of the Family Unit

There are likewise several areas of medical ethics that encroach into the family unit. Cloning has garnered a great deal of attention the past few years. When Dolly, a female sheep, was first cloned (she was born July 5, 1996), she garnered a lot of attention since she was the first mammal to be cloned from an adult somatic cell (they used the process of nuclear transfer). Cloning is a process of

reproduction apart from the normal mating (there are three different types of cloning: recombinant DNA technology or DNA cloning, reproductive cloning, and therapeutic cloning or embryo cloning). Reproductive cloning is to create a genetic duplicate of an individual organism, animal or human, through asexual reproduction, as by stimulating a single cell. Some claim that great historic figures could be reproduced by a preservation of their cells or if a loved one dies an untimely death then save some cells and clone him, and some could arrogantly decide to clone themselves. However, all such attempts at cloning strike at the heart of God's design for human reproduction within the family unit. Another basic problem is producing humans (even in embryonic form) for experimental purposes is wrong (a violation of basic human rights). Then the process would involve creating several human embryos and destroying all but the *fittest* (aborting them) which would violate the sanctity of human life. Within the last few decades there has been an overt attempt to blur the lines of distinction between male and female. It was seen in the unisex movement and in the homosexual movement. A growing practice has also been surgically altering one's sex. (We are not discussing when a person is born with a sexual abnormality: i.e., intersex—formerly known as hermaphrodite.) While surgeries of this type go by various names (sex reassignment, gender reassignment, genital reconstruction, sex affirmation, sex realignment), it is most commonly called sex change surgery. Most who seek this type of surgery are referred to as *transsexual*. Altering oneself from one sex to the other flies in the face of God's creation. The psalmist correctly records: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well" (Psa. 139:14). Those who seek this basically state that God got it all wrong and they need to correct it. Any attempt to alter the design of the human body for the purpose of an arbitrary gender change is a perversion of God's design of the distinction of the sexes.

When a woman finds herself sterile, many will opt for a surrogacy. There are two types: traditional surrogacy where it is the child's genetic mother, or gestational surrogacy where no genetic relationship occurs. In surrogacy a fertilized egg will be implanted in a woman's womb who then carries the child to term or a woman may allow a herself to be artificially inseminated so she can have a child naturally as opposed to adoption. The concept of womb for hire is contrary to the sacredness of the family unit. Parental responsibility begins at conception (and in many ways before conception) and does not end till that child reaches a stage of maturity that allows him to be independent and in many ways does not end. There is the training and restraining of children by their parents (Pro. 22:6; Eph. 6:1-4). To surrender one's reproductive powers to another person would end up being a neglecting and abdicating of the parental responsibility God has

given. Also having a child for the purpose of selling or giving it away would be a violation of the family unit God established. Any situation that violates that family unit God established is not moral.

CONCLUSION

In the Charles Dickens novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens begins by saying: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” In many respects this is true of today in regards to medical advances. We can do things today that were not even dreamed of in times past. However, with the advances in technology come moral issues that were never faced in prior times. The only way to determine what is ethical in any situation is to have our feet firmly planted on the Word of God. It has everything we need to know pertaining to making moral decisions. If we keep those principles of the sanctity of human life, the honor of man, and the sacredness of the family unit in mind, then whatever medical issues might arise in the future, we will be able to determine what is right and what is wrong.

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God's Need For Men

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In the long ago, God instructed Jeremiah to, “Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it” (Jer. 5:1). The days of Jeremiah were dark days for the children of Israel. Soon God was going to bring about a destruction of Jerusalem and carrying the Israelites into captivity at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian armies. As a result of this ungodly condition, God tells Jeremiah to see if he can find any men because they were sorely needed. Jeremiah searched, but there were no men that were doing what God expected.

God has always needed men and needs men in the church today. “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13). Quit you like men comes from a single word meaning “to be manly,” “to act like a man,” or “play the man.” Let us notice a few types of men God needs in the church today. God needs men of conviction. As is being used here, conviction carries the meaning of “convincing or bringing certainty to the mind” and not “the act of proving or finding guilty of a crime or sin.” When a person has a knowledge and assurance of something, they are convinced they are right; they are men of conviction.

This quality to a great extent has been lost in the people of the United States. It is almost a badge of honor to have no true convictions regarding any subject, but simply be a person that accepts anything and everything. What is in the world eventually makes its way into the church. While at one time, the church had convictions regarding most all religious issues, such is not the case today. Years of being told and instructed that we cannot know or be assured of anything has taken its toll. Yet, Jesus still says, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Later, in His high priestly prayer, He prayed, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (17:17). Since God’s Word is truth, and others are now saying we cannot really know the truth; they are saying we cannot know and understand what God says. Yet, Paul writes, “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is”

(Eph. 5:17). We can understand the Lord's will, and if we can understand it, we will be understanding it the same.

Yet, the cry today (even by many of our own brethren) is to agree to disagree. The world, and many brethren are saying that it does not make any difference what one believes as long as he is sincere. Thus, no one should be dogmatic about anything. What this ultimately states is that we should not have strong convictions regarding any subject and in particular matters of a spiritual nature. These views are patently false and they destroy the moral fiber of both the nation and the church. James describes such people by saying, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). People have simply become wish-washy today. Elijah charged the people of his day (and likewise applies to us) to take a stand and to take one even if it was wrong: "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word" (1 Kin. 18:21). The Laodiceans were condemned with the words, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16). God needed men—men of conviction—instead of lukewarm members who were good for nothing. This quality will lead to other qualities God can use. Consider some areas where this quality of conviction where we, brethren, will be dependable, take a stand and be men of action.

We must have conviction regarding God, His existence and nature. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). We cannot please God without believing He exists. Likewise we must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). Peter made the good confession when he answered Jesus' question with the words, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mat. 16:16).

We need to be men of conviction regarding the church Jesus established upon that good confession of Peter's. We need to realize and hold to the fact that there is only one church. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4). That body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23), thus only one church even though there are many pretenders in the world. We must be convicted regarding the terms Christ has established for entrance into that one church which He established (Mat. 16:18) and of which He is its head (Eph. 1:22-23). When one views the Great Commission (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47), we learn what Christ requires. The Gospel must

be preached so people (Rom. 10:12-17) can hear God's saving message because faith comes by hearing God's Word. Faith is required and upon that faith, one must repent of his sins. Also, a faith that is not worth confessing is not worth having, so confession of our faith is necessary (Mat. 16:16; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37). One must then be baptized (immersed) in water for the purpose of the remission of sins or salvation. We need to have brethren who will stand with conviction regarding God's terms of entrance into the church.

Likewise, we need faithful brethren who have convictions regarding the worship of the church. We must recognize there are five (5) avenues through which we worship God: singing, prayer, Lord's Supper, Contribution, and preaching. In that worship we must also recognize that men and not women are to lead the worship (1 Tim. 2:11-12). Sadly, we have many today who have lost that conviction God desires and are allowing women leaders in all aspects of the church. Also, we have many elderships and congregations who have compromised in allowing mechanical instruments of music in the worship and prayers to someone other than the Father (through the mediatorship of Christ), the Lord's Supper being a common meal and partaking of it on any day of the week instead of the one and only day that was authorized by God—the first day of the week, Sunday. The preaching in many congregations is totally worthless as to preaching the Word (2 Tim. 4:2) reproof, rebuking, and exhorting with all longsuffering and doctrine. All that is done in many pulpits is nice, short, moralistic stories being told, but little to no preaching the Word.

God needs men of conviction regarding the organization of the church of Christ. Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18) and as such He has all authority (Mat. 28:18) and we must do everything by His authority (Col. 3:17). Since Christ is the head, there are no earthly headquarters for the church even though many pretenders. On the local level, there are local congregations with each one autonomous in nature under the headship of Christ. Within that local congregation, God established elders (pastors, overseers, shepherds, bishops, presbyters) to make decisions in carrying out what God has authorized (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). These men (a plurality in each congregation) watch for the souls of those under their care (Heb. 13:17). These men must meet the qualifications set forth by God in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3. Additionally, 1 Timothy 3 also gives the qualifications for deacons who serve under the oversight of the elders. Yet, there are many attacks on the leadership within congregations. There have always been the Diotrefes who try to rule over everyone else. Then there are those who have attacked the authority of the eldership saying the elders only authority is their example to the Dave Miller elder reevaluation reaffirmation doctrine and practice. A more subtle attack is

simply to refuse to appoint an eldership.

Men of conviction are needed by God when it comes to whom we are to fellowship. We need men who will only fellowship those who are in fellowship with God. To be in fellowship with God, one must obey the Gospel; obey those terms God set forth to become a Christian (see previous comments regarding this). However, if one is no longer walking in the light (1 John 1:7) and, thus, walking in darkness, then we do not have fellowship with God (1 John 1:6). When a person teaches false doctrine, then they do not have God (2 John 9). Additionally, those who fellowship the false teacher are also separating themselves from God (2 John 10-11). Yet, many brethren defend their joint participation in speaking appointments with those who are false teachers by claiming their joint participation is not fellowship. (“Joint participation” is one of the definitions of fellowship. Thus, if their joint participation in these programs is not fellowship, then what is it?) When those who have the conviction that God demands expose the compromisers regarding their sinful fellowship, they are then attacked by those compromisers and their supporters. We must also recognize God’s standard of fellowship when one walks disorderly “and not after the tradition which he received of us” (2 The. 3:6). That tradition Paul speaks of is that Gospel of Christ as we see in 2 Thessalonians 2:14-15.

Conviction is needed in moral areas. Through the years worldliness and materialism has crept into the church (maybe now rushing in might be the more accurate term). At one time the church stood firm regarding the various types of immorality because brethren had the conviction of God’s standard of morality. We need men of conviction today who will stand against the immorality, immodest apparel, dancing, “social” drinking, tobacco, gambling and the lottery, corrupt communication, and all the other forms of worldliness that is permeating our society and the Lord’s church. God expects Christians and the church to be pure: “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Mat. 5:8). God’s grace that brings salvation teaches us to deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts” and “live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit. 2:12). An example of things brethren need to have some conviction about concerns the viewing and drawing of semi-nude pictures in the art department at Freed-Hardeman University. Because of the inaction of the University regarding this matter, a website with the documentation and a petition was created. I would encourage all brethren to go to the website (<https://kteam1981.wixsite.com/fhu-uncovered>) and read the documentation and then sign the petition. Is it not time for brethren to have both convictions regarding morality and be willing to take a stand regarding it?

In Jeremiah's day, he searched for a man but could not find one. The result was the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem. If Jeremiah was alive today, would he find a man? Would he find men of conviction in the Lord's church? I certainly believe he would find some, but the number is dwindling at an alarming rate. Each one of us should determine in his mind to be men of conviction regarding God and His Word.

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