

Christian Fundamentals

Class Composite

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2003

Fundamentals of our Faith

What must we believe?

- Religious groups more often than not see themselves only by how they differ in their beliefs from others, rather than by the really important ideas that we have in common.
- What of these are necessary, and what are sufficient?
- The Christian fundamentals class will examine the critical elements of our faith.

Our purpose is to make us think!

Humans have historically confused belief with faith, and assume that the more correct one's belief the more spiritual he is.

Larry Richards, The Screwloose Lectures

Fundamentals of our Faith

- Like our previous class, where we looked for the fundamental particles or rules of the universe, we want to know the heart of the gospel
- This will be somewhat similar to the “What does God Want” small groups class, but with an emphasis on what we **know** rather than what we **feel and do**

**We're not looking for how little knowledge we can get by with,
but how we can accept others and promote unity**

Outline of the Class

- **Introduction**
- “Truth”
- Principles vs Rules
- Particular Issues
- Fellowship

This will be very flexible, since I don't know what I am doing!

Grace covers our inability to obey

GRACE

A diagram consisting of a large yellow rectangle with a red border. Inside the yellow rectangle, towards the bottom-left corner, is a smaller green rectangle with a red border. The word 'GRACE' is written in bold blue text at the top center of the yellow rectangle. The word 'Obedience' is written in bold blue text in the center of the green rectangle.

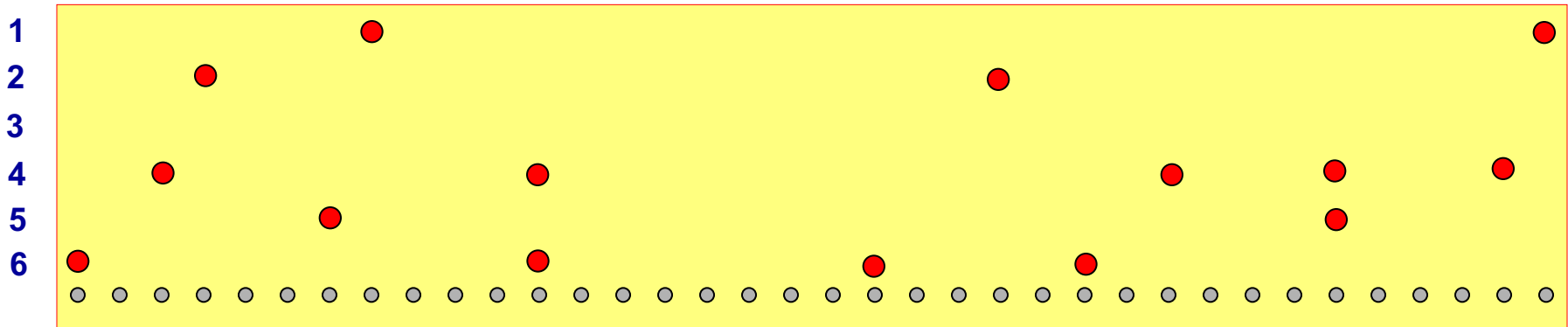
Obedience

A reminder of how grace works

Our discrete view of Sin

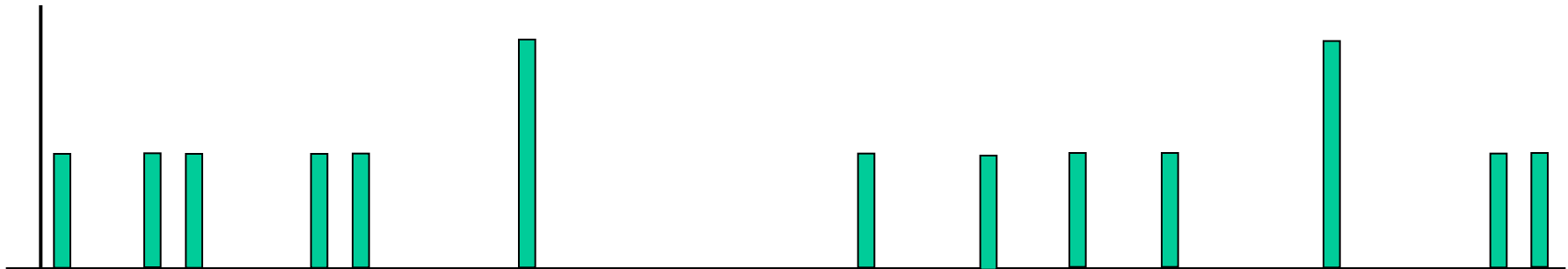
Like the computer paper tape that we used to use

Sin#



Time →

Sintensity



Time →

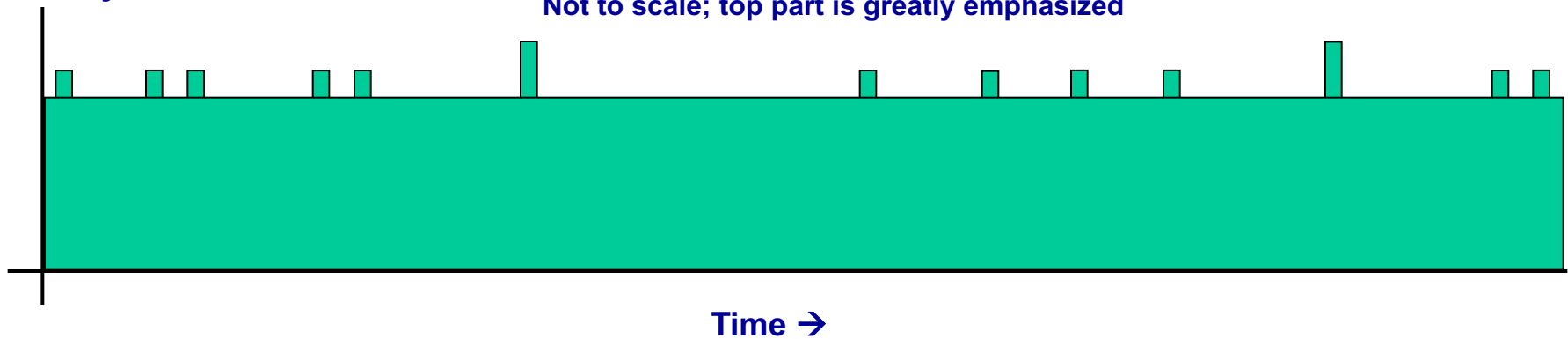
Sin is not only a digital thing

The real nature of Sin is continuous

- We think that our sin is finite and something we can deal with
- We hope to counter it by doing good things
- But Good is more than simple, distinct, acts
- It has to do with a continual outpouring of love
- We are continually 'not' loving people, and we can't overcome this lack

Sintensity

Not to scale; top part is greatly emphasized



We seldom consider our sinful nature

Why show this about obedience?

Because we have the same problem with our knowledge

- we cannot know it all
- God must overlook our insufficiency

What we lack must be covered by Grace

- we are accounted as righteous
- we must be accounted as knowledgeable

Knowledge is similar to Obedience

GRACE

Obedience

Knowledge

Grace also covers our heart

GRACE

“With all of our heart”

Obedience

Knowledge

Grace accounts us as giving 100% of our heart

God wants us to worship in spirit and truth

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

John 4:19-24

But, as Pilate said, “What is truth?” (John 10:38)

What's so special about the woman at the well? ¹

Jesus did an amazing in speaking to this woman. It was not “cool” to do this because:

- she was a woman
- she was a Samaritan
- she was a “sinner” (many husbands)

When she realized that Jesus was a prophet, she did not ask about her own situation (whether her current steady would marry her, for instance), but asked about the truth.

The focal point was not the fundamental nature of God and his kingdom, but a detail about the place of worship (sound familiar?)

She ended up convincing her whole town to listen to Jesus

We think that we are able to cover “All Truth”

TRUTH

Using a map and orienteering principles
Asking which way is east
(because you want to go north)

Think of a city map, and directions to our objective
Do we need to know each store on the way?
Does everyone have to go the exact same way?

God wants us to meditate rather than just have the “correct ideas”

Love is a better teacher than a sense of duty.

Einstein

Grace also covers all our shortcomings

GRACE

“With all of our heart”

The more we love other people, the more we love God

Obedience

Knowledge

**Grace accounts us though we are righteous,
knowledgeable, and love Him with all of our heart**

The beauty of Grace is that it covers everything

We need to understand the tremendous depth of God's Grace

We can now have confidence and comfort in the arms of God's grace

“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Hebrews 4:16

Does God have a Split Personality?

The God of the Old and New Testament appear to be so different

God was so harsh many times, and he let man be his instrument of destruction

Killing entire populations or families

But God's people were so stiff-necked and mule-headed that they continued in a cycle of rebellion – need – deliverance – rebellion

The story about the child on the roof

Humanity had to learn about the ineffectiveness of a rule-based way of life; Humanity had to grow up, too.

Even the 10 commandments, though, were founded on the concept of loving God and our neighbor.

Abraham believed that God would not kill righteous people in Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:25: “Far be it from you...”)

TRUTH

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God wants us to meditate rather than just have the “correct ideas”

Jesus is the way

- Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
- If we follow him, we follow the truth
- The way (or gate) is narrow which leads to heaven (Matthew 7:13-14)
- His sheep know his voice (John 10:27)
- Story: at the edge of the desert
 - Jesus is the only guide
 - He knows where the watering holes are

We sometimes lose our emphasis on following Jesus

Do we all have to go the exact same way?

- We all start at different parts of the map
 - The map includes the bad parts of town
 - We must not try to go a path that God warns us against, even though it looks feasible
- We do not all have to show love the same way
 - There are different gifts (srip)
 - We can implement God's will in various ways
 - To evangelize, we can use radio, TV, or tracts, etc
 - To serve, we may visit the sick or help individuals find clothing and furniture

God is infinite, and can encompass our individual natures

Can we just pay a taxi to drive us there?

We might arrive but God would say, “Depart from me, I don’t know you!” (scrip)

- This is our journey, and we cannot have a relationship with God without becoming involved
- People want to coast along and ask the preacher (or high priest, or other equivalent) what they believe
- Throughout history, there have been those who wanted to pay someone to be righteous for them (like during the Civil War, rich men paid others to go to war for them)
- This substitution of righteousness has been essentially accomplished through Christ
- But it is not possible otherwise

Think of David’s attitude towards a gift or a sacrifice which cost him nothing (2 Samuel 24:24)

How smart do we have to be to obtain salvation? ²

What IQ is required to understand God's message?

- It must be simple enough to be understood by the common man
- We must all be able to understand the message of salvation without a higher-level degree
- Jesus chose his disciples from the general working population; he did not go to the schools and look for the best students

**God's truth has infinite depth,
but the fundamentals are within our reach**

How smart do we have to be to use an electric light?²

There are different levels of knowledge

1. Know that if you flip the switch, the light comes on
2. Know the fundamentals of electricity, that voltage is required and the switch completes the circuit
3. Know about Ohm's law, where the current through the filament causes it to heat up so hot that it glows
4. Know about Planck's formula, which describes the radiation produced from a hot object
5. Know the Schroedinger equation, which describes the activity of the electrons moving in the filament

On which level must you be to be able to turn on the light?

Knowledge at other levels enables you to deal with problems better (like when the light doesn't work)

Knowledge of boating

Similar principle to the light

Many people are just in the boat - they don't know why they believe, they just know that they should be in the boat

Others work to know about boating, studying so that they can

- drive the boat
- navigate
- make repairs when the boat starts to sink

God will take care of those who are unable to comprehend

What did Adam and Eve need to know in the garden?

There was only one rule in the beginning

One law, but they could not obey it

Were they capable of obedience?

Were Adam and Eve under Grace?

The sin was eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil

Then there was a need for a certain knowledge of God and what man had to do to re-establish the proper relationship with God

The principles we have now are not much more complicated

But we must still pursue our study of God with all of our heart!

No pain, no gain

**God tried it the easy way first:
He created the perfect physical, without pain or death**

Man could not stand prosperity

He broke the one rule (which he could have kept)

God then changed the structure of the universe

Now we have many rules

And we have pain and suffering and death

But now we realize that we need God!

How many of the 10 commandments applied in the garden for Adam and Eve?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| 1) No strange gods | possibly |
| 2) No idols | possibly |
| 3) Don't take God's name in vain | yes |
| 4) Sabbath day | yes |
| 5) Honor Father and Mother | no |
| 6) Do not kill | yes |
| 7) Do not steal | possibly |
| 8) Do not commit adultery | no |
| 9) Do not lie | yes |
| 10) Do not covet | possibly |

They are all based on the concept of loving each other!

Saved by Faith

Does this mean that we have a certain creed that we must believe exactly?

Creed: A formal statement of religious belief; a confession of faith.

The “Apostle’s Creed”

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.

Amen.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Anathasian Creed

1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith; 2. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. 3. And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; 4. Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance. 5. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit. 6. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. 7. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit. 8. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated. 9. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible. 10. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. 11. And yet they are not three eternal but one eternal. 12. As also there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensible, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible. 13. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty. 14. And yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty. 15. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; 16. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. 17. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord; 18. And yet they are not three Lords but one Lord. 19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; 20. So are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say; There are three Gods or three Lords. 21. The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. 22. The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten. 23. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. 24. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. 25. And in this Trinity none is afore or after another; none is greater or less than another. 26. But the whole three persons are coeternal, and coequal. 27. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. 28. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity. 29. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. 30. For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man. 31. God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man of substance of His mother, born in the world. 32. Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. 33. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood. 34. Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ. 35. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of that manhood into God. 36. One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. 37. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ; 38. Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead; 39. He ascended into heaven, He sits on the right hand of the Father, God, Almighty; 40. From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. 41. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies; 42. and shall give account of their own works. 43. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting and they that have done evil into everlasting fire. 44. This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved.

Saved by Faith

Do we need a means of ensuring this “truth”

Catechism: A book containing a summary of principles, especially of religious doctrine, reduced to the form of questions and answers

- Catholic Catechism – outline runs several pages
- Heidelberg Catechism (Reformed Church)
- Westminster Shorter Catechism (accepted by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church) – 107 questions and answers
- Westminster Larger Catechism (accepted by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church) – 196 questions and answers

Creating a creed would be an interesting exercise²

Give the message of the gospel while standing on one foot, or perhaps in one sentence.

How would you draft a one-time one-minute message that would be heard in deepest Africa?

Have you ever written a personal creed?

We would not really use it as a creed

The Core of the God's Law

Can we give the gist of it while standing on one foot?

...various teachers and sages in Jewish history ... have searched for the most important comandments of Torah, the essential precepts for Jewish life.

- David: eleven principles (Psalm 15)
- Isaiah: six (Isaiah 33:15-16)
- Micah: three (Micah 6.8)
- Isaiah: two (Isaiah 56.1)
- Amos: one (Amos 5.4)
- Habakkuk based all of Torah on one principle (Habakkuk 2.4)

Marvin Meyer, Who do People Say I Am?

We often study the Word of God and miss the message of God.

Lawrence Crabb

So far...

- How much of the map of truth do we need?
- Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
- We don't need to have a high IQ to understand the plan of salvation
- Man couldn't behave when there was only one rule
- The "rules" are based on the concept of love
- Some resort to a creed to define their beliefs

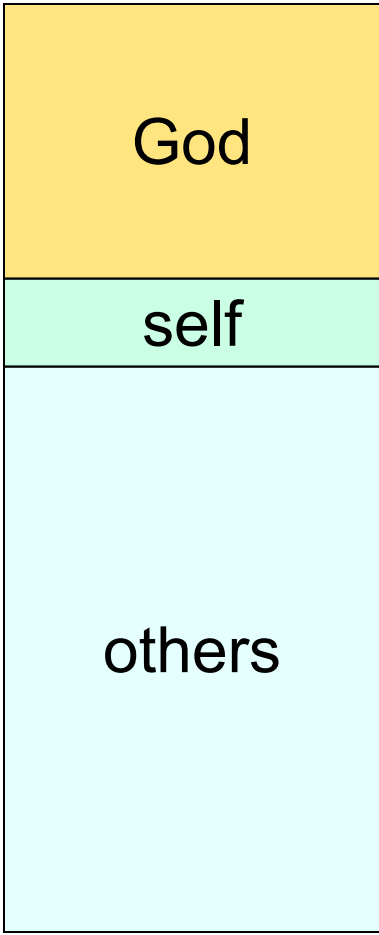
What did the Jews really need to believe?

- God was the creator of the universe
- God loved mankind as the most special part of that creation
 - He had a relationship with them
 - He wanted them to obey Him

Their awe of God should draw them near to follow Him

We generally think of the 10 Commandments as the core of what the Jewish people had to know

- 1) No strange gods
- 2) No idols
- 3) Don't take God's name in vain
- 4) Sabbath day
- 5) Honor Father and Mother
- 6) Do not kill
- 7) Do not steal
- 8) Do not commit adultery
- 9) Do not lie
- 10) Do not covet



They were to know God and respect His creation!

They considered the “Shema” another key passage³

This is in the chapter after the ten commandments

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Deuteronomy 6:5

The more we love God, the more we love other people

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Marvin Meyer, Who do People Say I Am?

David's Eleven (Psalm 15)

LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?

He whose **walk is blameless (1)** and who **does what is righteous (2)**, who **speaks the truth from his heart (3)** and has **no slander on his tongue (4)**, who **does his neighbor no wrong (5)** and **casts no slur on his fellowman (6)**, who **despises a vile man (7)** but **honors those who fear the LORD (8)**, who **keeps his oath even when it hurts (9)**, who **lends his money without usury (10)** and **does not accept a bribe against the innocent (11)**.

He who does these things will never be shaken.

Isaiah's Six (Isaiah 33:14-16)

The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?"

He who **walks righteously (1)** and **speaks what is right (2)**, who **rejects gain from extortion (3)** and **keeps his hand from accepting bribes (4)**, who **stops his ears against plots of murder (5)** and **shuts his eyes against contemplating evil (6)** --

this is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him.

Micah's Three (Micah 6:8)

He has showed you, O man, what is good.

And what does the LORD require of you?

To **act justly (1)** and to **love mercy (2)** and to **walk humbly with your God (3)**.

Isaiah's Two (Isaiah 56:1)

This is what the LORD says:

"Maintain justice (1) and do what is right (2), for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed."

Amos' One (Amos 5:4)

This is what the LORD says to the house of Israel:

"Seek me (1) and live..."

Habakkuk's One (Habakkuk 2:4)

... but **the righteous will live by his faith (1)** ...

Amos's even better One (Amos 5:15)

Hate Evil, Love Good...

This is pretty much the basics!

The Core of the God's Law

Jesus's answer

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'^{*} This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^{**} All the Law and the Prophets **hang** on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:36-40

^{*} from Deuteronomy 6:5

^{**} from Leviticus 19:18

All of the "rules" are founded on the principle of Love

The Core of the Gospel

Paul's answer

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.

For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

1 Corinthians 2:1-2

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...”

1 Corinthians 15:3-5

The Core of the Gospel

John's answer

“And this is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another.”

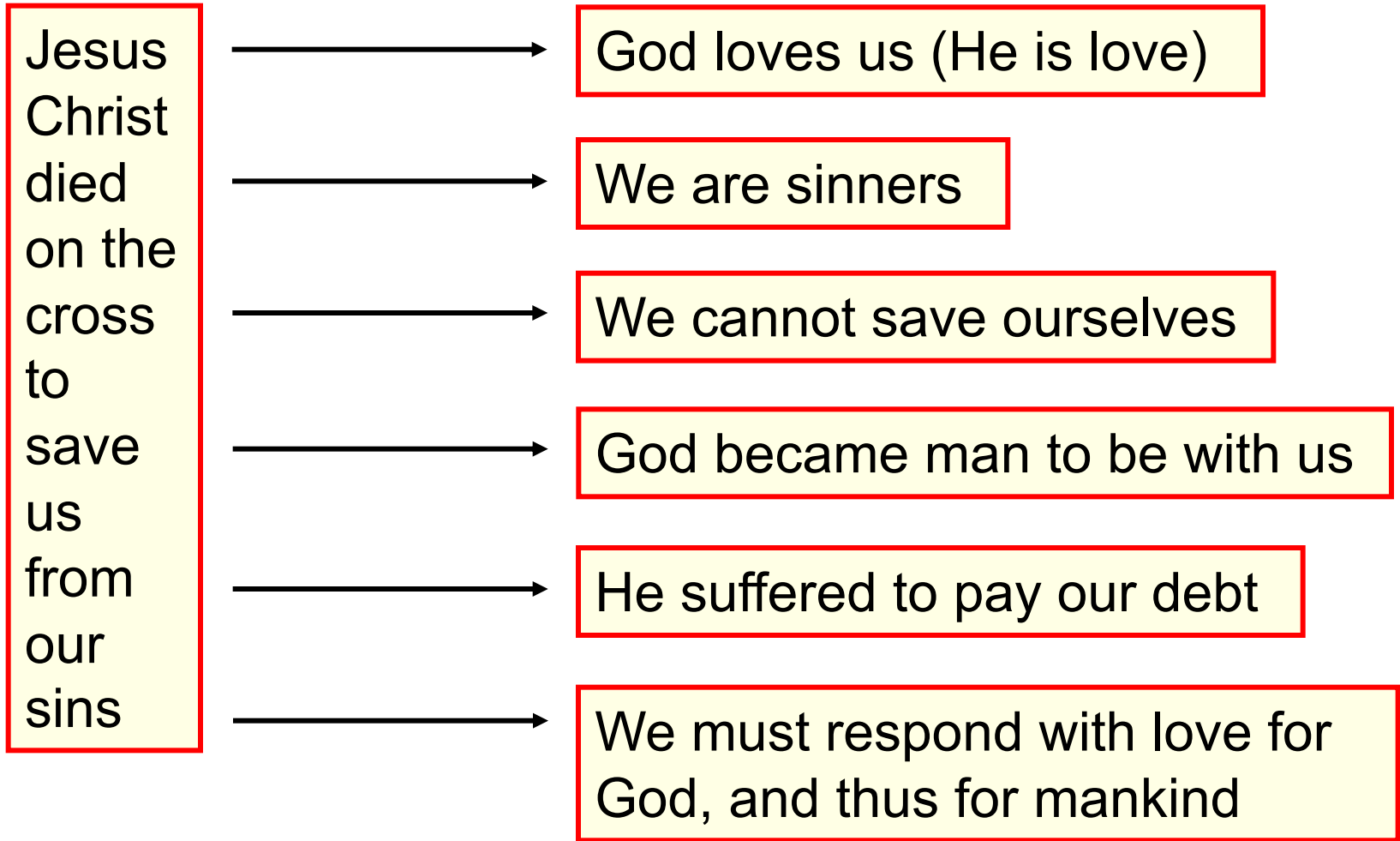
1 John 3:23

And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another.

And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

2 John 1-5-6

What can we derive from this simple summary? ³



Outline of the Class

- Introduction
- **“Truth”**
- Principles vs Rules
- Particular Issues
- Fellowship

This will be very flexible, since I don't know what I am doing!

We use the “truth” to try to gain superiority

TRUTH

If you don't believe like we do about...

**Holy Spirit
marriage and divorce
creation
“fun”
baptism
communion
the millenium**

Then you won't (can't) be saved!

“We follow what the Bible says”

**We feel that this closes the matter
But everyone says that same thing
Why then do we have such bitter disagreements?**

**Why do so many hold that view,
but then have to ask the preacher what they believe?**

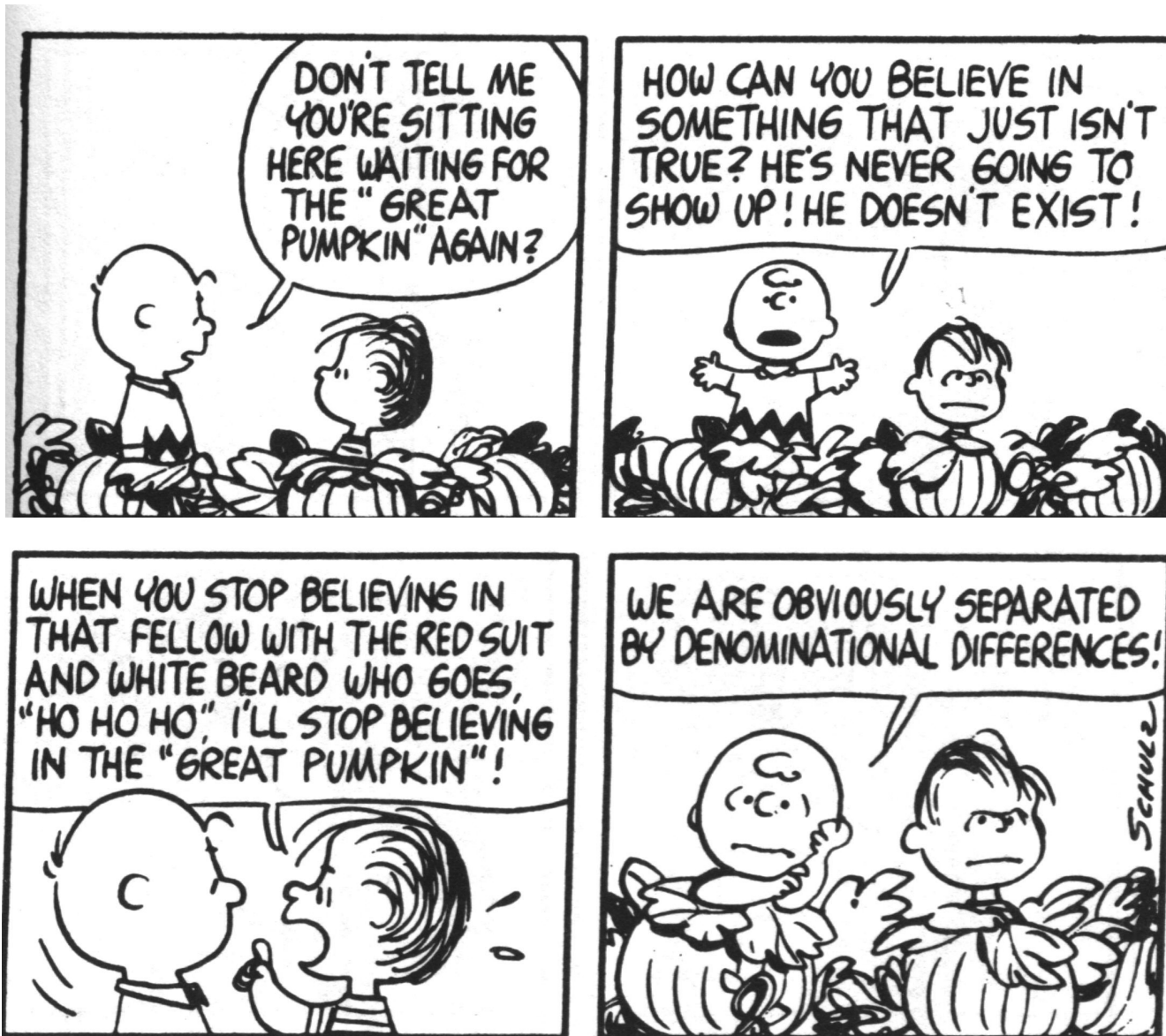
**We have lost the simple message of the gospel
We have elevated the importance of too many details**

As Pilate asked, “What is truth?”

John 18:38

We divide over many issues

Linus believes that you must simply be sincere



Examples of Sincerity

Saul was very sincere about shutting down what he considered to be destructive false teaching, but God sent him a special messenger to give him better knowledge

Paul's words can be very "hard" (2 Peter 3:15-16) but

- he knew the real core of the gospel (1 Cor. 2:1-2)**
- he knew how hard he had to struggle to do right (Romans 7:15ff)**

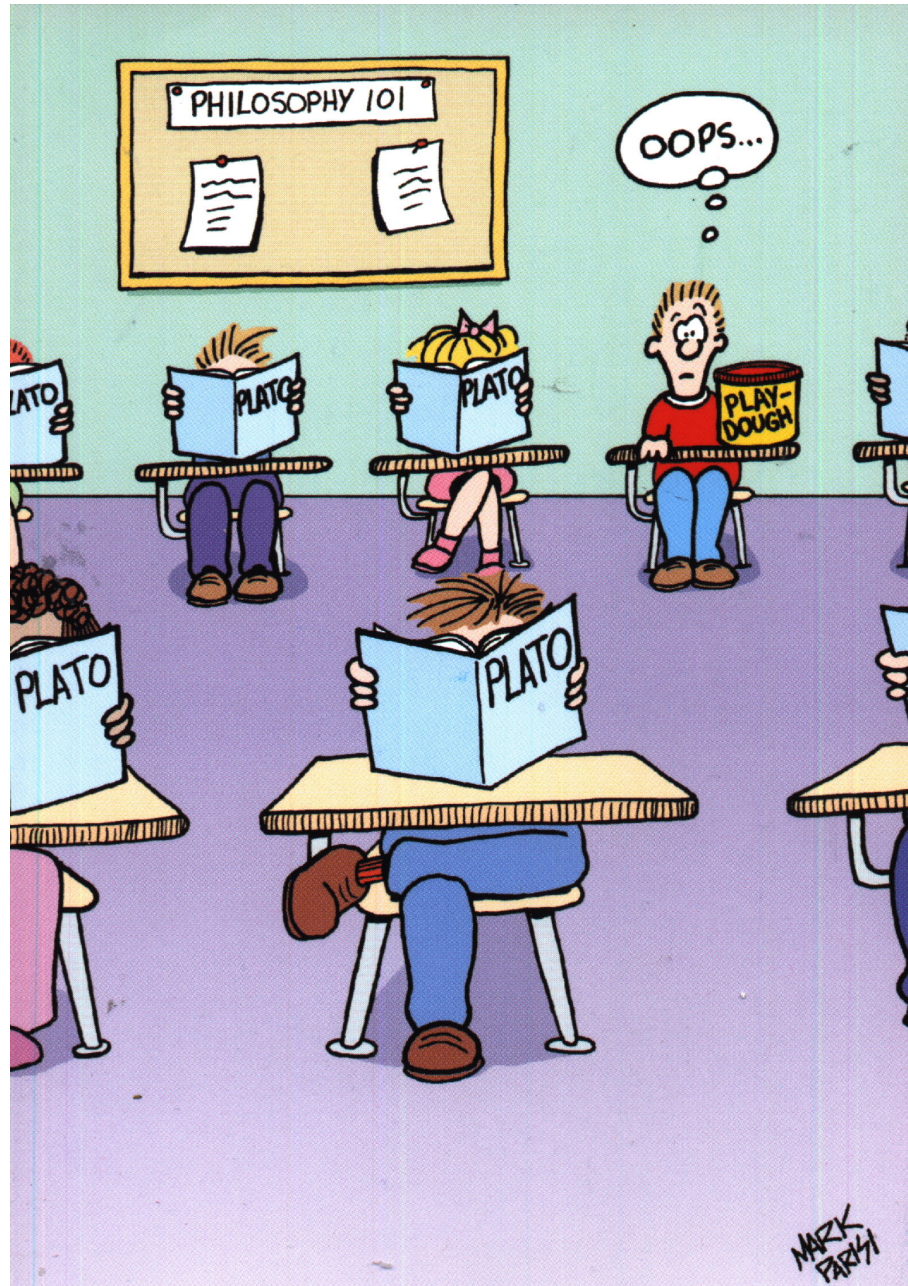
Cornelius was also very sincere, but without proper knowledge. God also sent him a special messenger to help him (Acts 10).

Sincerity is necessary, but not sufficient

The Word became flesh – and then through theologians it became words again.

Karl Barth

Ever been in this situation?



So far...

- Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
- We don't need to have a high IQ to understand the plan of salvation
- Man couldn't behave when there was only one rule
- The "rules" are based on the concept of love
- Some resort to a creed to define their beliefs
- The Bible shows the key elements we need to know
- We must not use "truth" to try to gain superiority

The Core of the God's Law

10 Commandments:

Deuteronomy 5

Shema:

Deuteronomy 6:5

- David: eleven principles

Psalms 15

- Isaiah: six

Isaiah 33:15-16

- Micah: three

Micah 6.8

- Isaiah: two

Isaiah 56.1

- Amos: one (or two)

Amos 5.4 and 5:15

- Habakkuk: one

Habakkuk 2.4

- Jesus:

Matthew 22:36-40

- Paul:

1 Corinthians 2:1-2

1 Corinthians 15:3-5

- John

1 John 3:23

2 John 1:5-6

The Extent of the Neighbor Concept

Who is my neighbor? (limit this, please)

Parable of the Good Samaritan: Luke 10:30ff

The neighbor was one whom the Jews despised; he was the hero in this story rather than them.

The idea of neighbor is really all-inclusive, not just someone who lives nearby or believes as you do.

We must learn to practice this

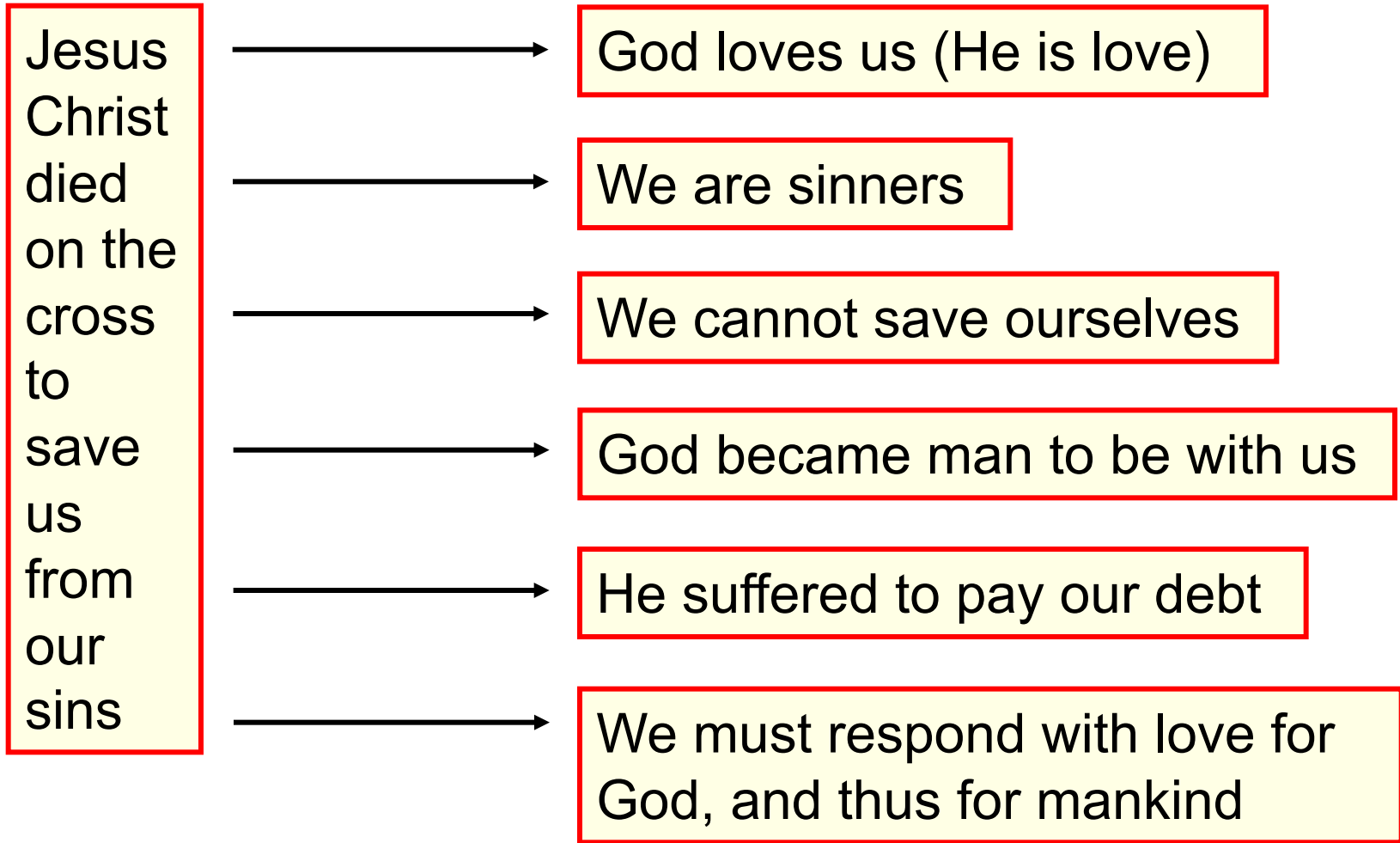
Further commentary on the neighbor principle

The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are **summed up** in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the **fulfillment** of the law.

Romans 13:9

What can we derive from this simple summary?



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This will be very flexible, since I don't know what I am doing!

We use the “truth” to try to gain superiority

TRUTH

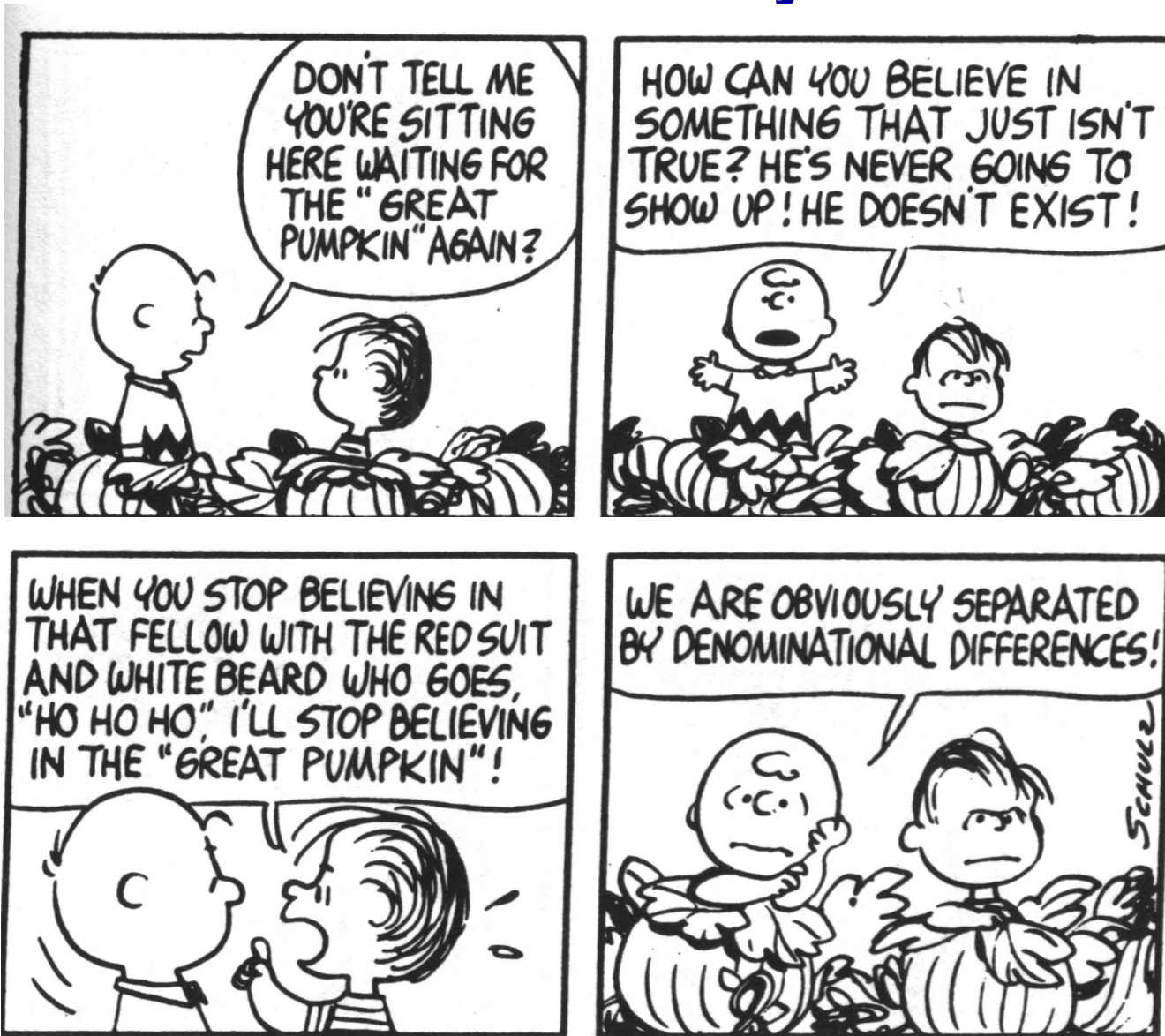
If you don't believe like we do about...

Holy Spirit
marriage and divorce
creation
“fun”
baptism
communion
the millenium

Then you won't (can't) be saved!

We must do more than just claim to do “what the Bible says”

We divide over many issues



I goofed last week when I talked about Linus and Lucy

We are too ready to fight instead of understand



It was Charlie Brown's sister Sally

What else the Bible says about Truth

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

John 17:17

You have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth...

Romans 2:20

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth.

1 Corinthians 13:6

God's household, which is the church of the living God, [is] the pillar and foundation of the truth.

1 Timothy 3:15

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and correctly handles the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in His presence.

1 John 3:18-19

We are so afraid of False Teachers...

But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Matthew 18:6

Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

Acts 20:30

You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?

Galatians 4:16

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

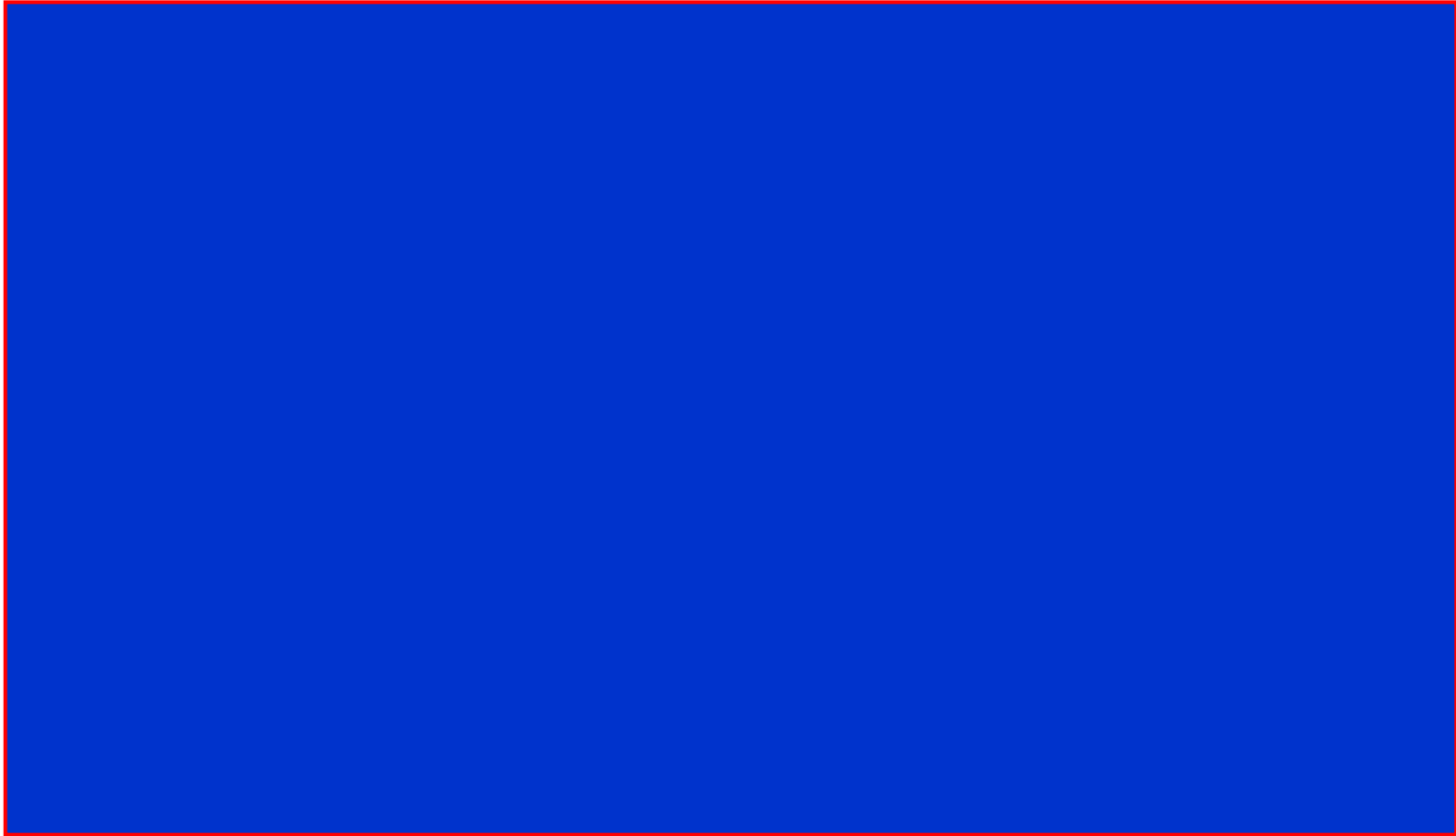
1 John 4:1

Many will follow their shameful ways and bring the way of truth into disrepute.

2 Peter 2:2

We don't want to miss the forest for the trees!

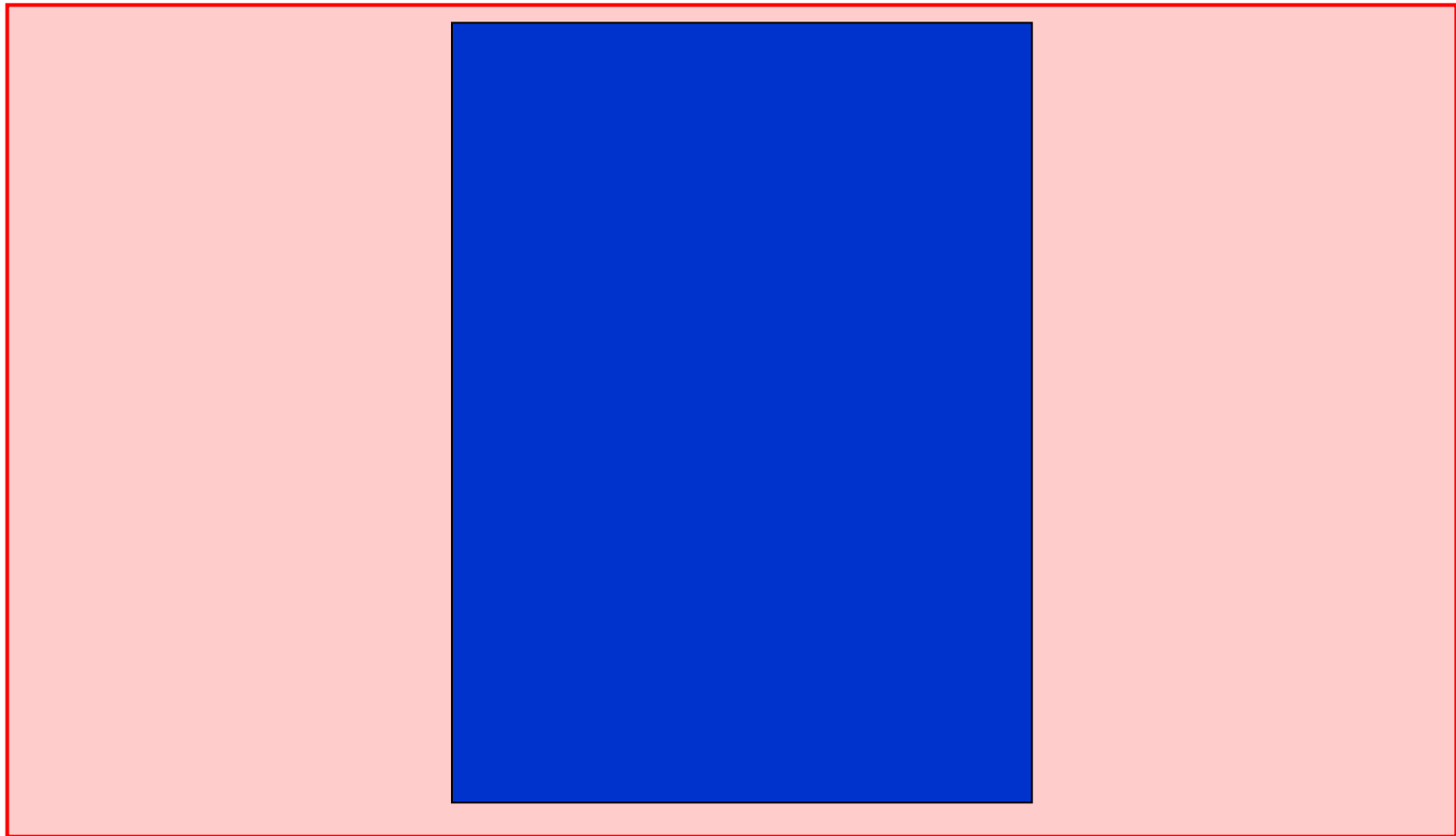
Can we see the forest for the trees?



Can we see the forest for the trees?



Can we see the forest for the trees?



Can we see the forest for the trees?

4

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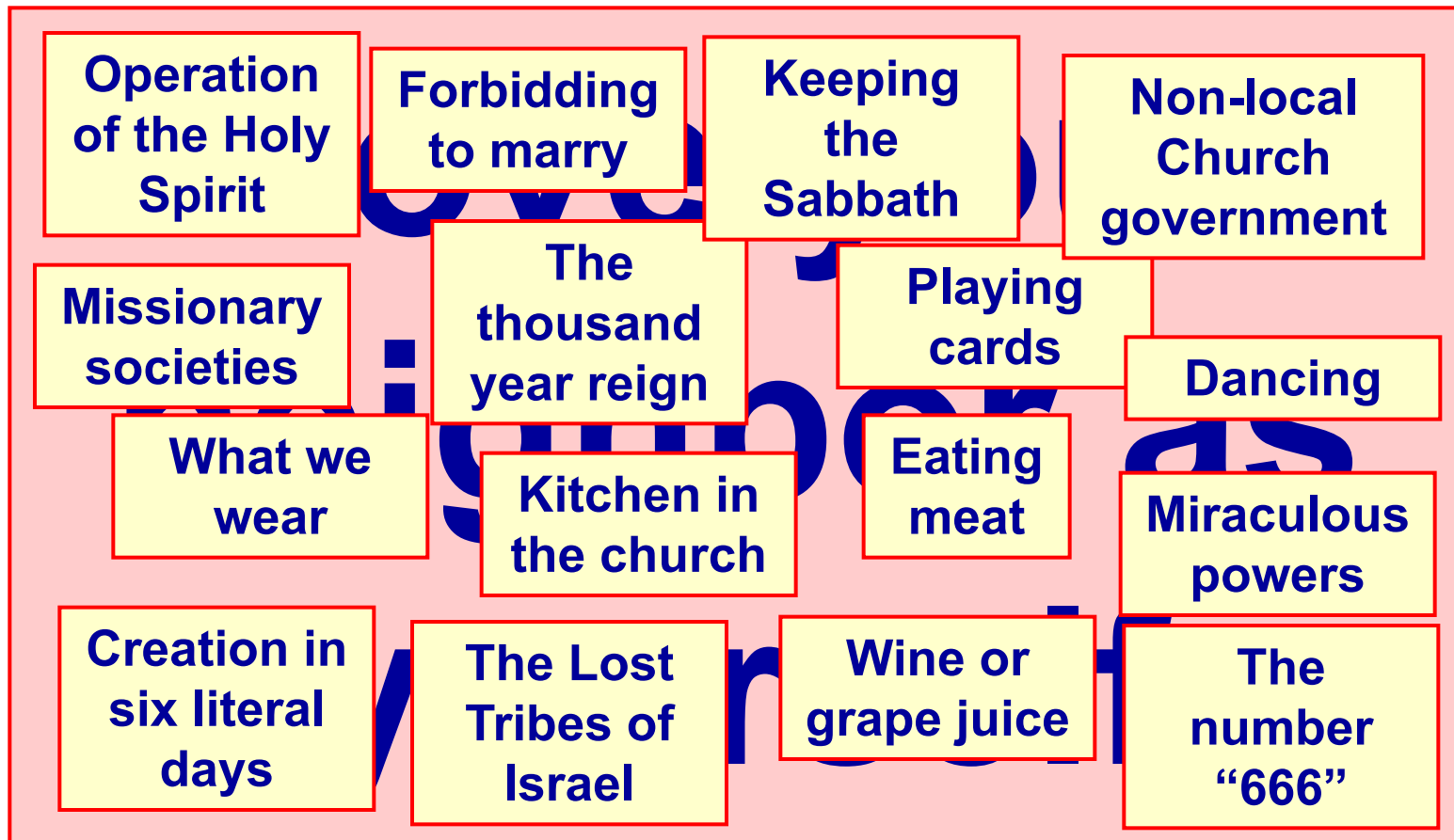
Can we see the forest for the trees?

4

**Love your
neighbor as
yourself**

We must not try to focus so closely that we miss the point

We must also not clutter up the picture



Some people insist on adding details so that everything can be explained; like adding superstructure on the boat, or patching a garment that we think is holey (not "holy")

Speck vs Beam

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Matthew 7:3-5 (NIV)

**We must not put other things in our field of view!
It is not wrong to consider them, but we must keep from making
them our idols**

We must always keep the fundamentals in mind

The real danger lies within us!

They exchanged the truth of God for a lie , and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator ... Romans 1:25

They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.
2 Thessalonians 2:10

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.
2 Timothy 4:3-4

We miss the truth because we love something else more!

Many will not accept the straight truth

They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

"Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving."

For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'

Acts 28:25-27 (quoted from Isaiah 6:9:10)

Jesus: This is why I speak to them in parables (Matthew 13:13)
Jesus quotes the same passage in Matthew 13:14-15

Outline of the Class

- Introduction
- “Truth”
- **Principles vs Rules**
- Particular Issues
- Fellowship

This will be very flexible, since I don't know what I am doing!

Is the Bible Emphasis on Principles or Rules?

4

Inside, at the heart, NT

Principles: working from general philosophy to determine the right course of action

Rules: working from a specific set of rules which set arbitrary limits on actions

Outside, surface, OT

Think about which method produces the best results

Are the 10 commandments sufficient?

Do they cover all of the possibilities?

No commandment about hitting people (short of murder).

No commandment about insulting people.

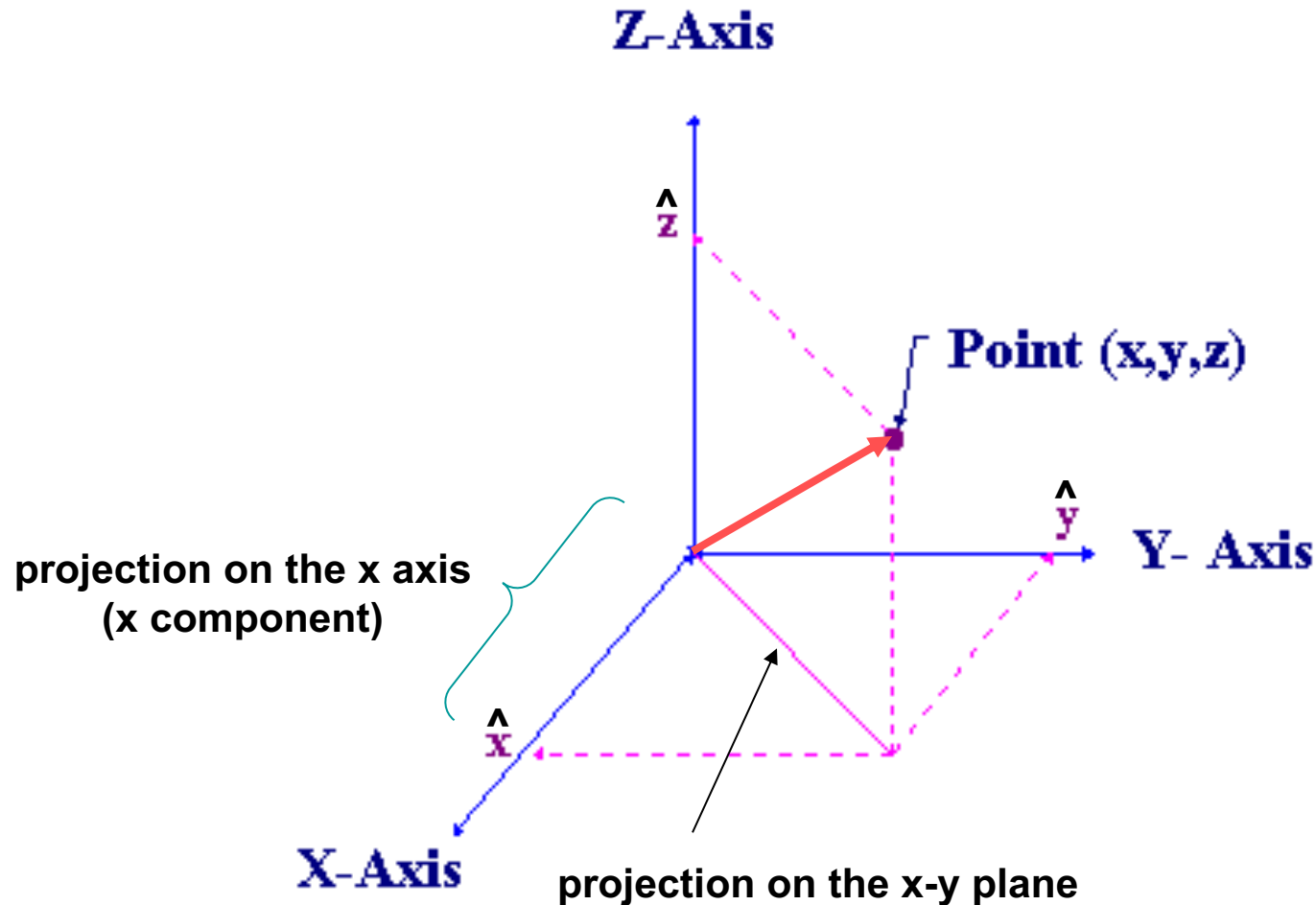
No commandment about slander.

No commandment about generally being mean

Many other regulations were added in the OT

Covering the entire range

We need only three independent axes to define our space



**These are the fundamental vectors; they span the space.
They are sufficient!**

Rugged Scenery

Remember the joke about the fishermen walking across the lake to their car?

We view our journey into the land of truth in a similar way, as though the way of safety was hidden to all but a few.

We see it as rock-hopping down a rugged stream bed, looking frantically for the solid places. We would rather have a smooth, easy path so that we didn't have to concentrate so much.

We need principles that teach us how to walk safely, not a flat plain where we cannot possibly trip up.

Some of us trip even when the floor is smooth.

Rugged Scenery

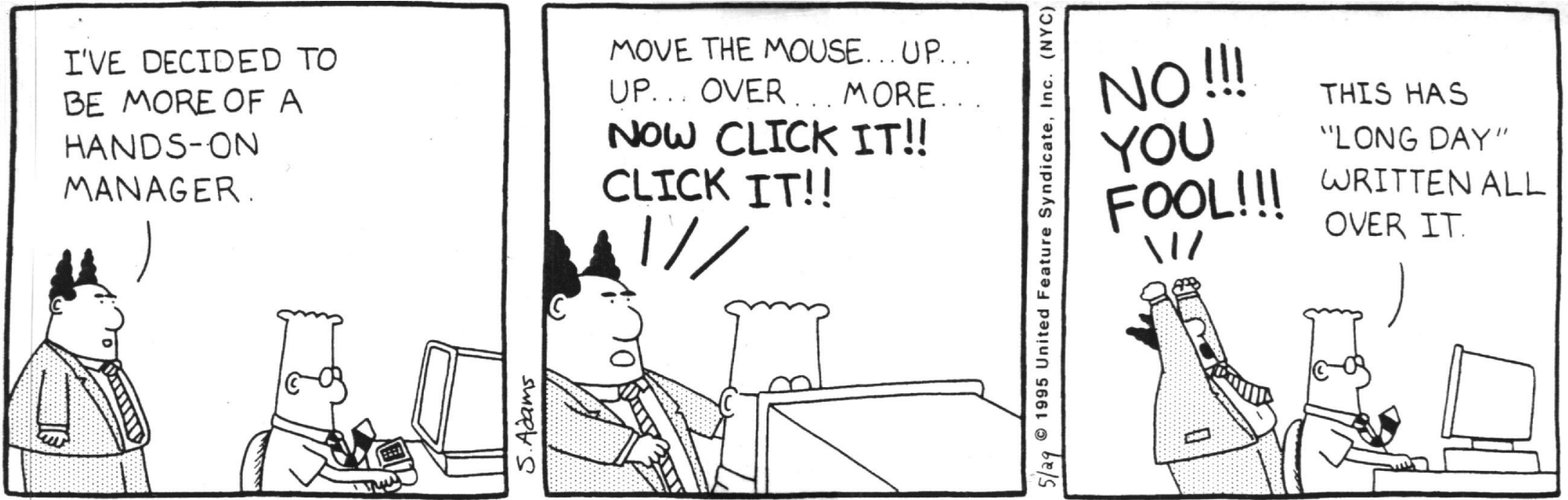
We look at the terrain of the “truth” and we see treacherous holes (things we don’t understand) and are afraid to step out without creating bridges and paving over places.

So we create a “superstructure” by building theories and setting rules that God didn’t intend.

The perfect example of this is the way the Jews added to the law. They defined exactly what “work” was on the Sabbath, such as saying that if you carried more ink than required to write the two smallest Hebrew letters, you were in violation.

God will help us find our way

The Pharisees were the masters of micro-management



This is the way “following the rules” feels when we lose sight of the founding principles

The laws are to protect us

Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Mark 2:27

They are given to help us have the best life

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10

The laws are to protect us

Dorothy Sayers points out that there is a difference between saying,

'if you hold your finger in the fire you will get burned' and saying,

'if you whistle at your work I shall beat you, because the noise gets on my nerves.

Which does the law of God really mean?

**It is given to help us not to hurt each other.
What a world it would be if we were good to each other!**

The Golden Rule (or Principle)

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew 7:12

This principle would cover almost anything!

Note the similarity to the greatest commandments: they both sum up the Law and the prophets!

Principle-based Rules



Remember the Rubik's Cube?

Did you ever solve it?

Many pages of instructions to solve – but once you learn the principles, you can solve it from any initial configuration!

Rules based on principles are good; just don't worship them!

We must emphasize the Principles

Emphasizing the rules only is like looking into the wrong end of a telescope!

Think how big the book would have to be to cover every situation!

Studying for a test – If you knew the answers to the questions, you could pass the test. But you wouldn't have any real working knowledge!

Dr. Brand's work with Leprosy

- Leprosy is not very contagious
 - The problem is that nerves are killed by a germ
 - Then there is no feeling pain, no adjustment to injury
 - They have no feedback from their hands or feet
 - Injured parts of the body remain infected until the body rejects them
 - People with this disease have to monitor their bodies carefully for injuries, and not do things that risk injury
-
- Dr. Brand tried to create an artificial feedback system
 - Bells, buzzers, lights: nothing worked
 - The patient would just turn the device off when they really wanted to do something that would hurt them

Lessons from Dr. Brand's work to create "pain" 4

- Knowledge is not enough: even when the patients totally understood that doing something would hurt them, they continued if they wanted to
- Unless there is real "pain"; there is not enough incentive to stop doing wrong
- We must "believe it with all of our heart"
- Similarly, having rules without understanding the principles behind them does not work
- We develop the "Corban" philosophy, where the real needs of people are ignored

The bigger the diameter of our circle of knowledge, the greater the circumference of our circle of ignorance.

McKinnon

Introduction

- **Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)**
- **We don't need to have a high IQ to understand the plan of salvation**
- **Man couldn't behave when there was only one rule**
- **The "rules" are based on the concept of love**
- **The "Core" of God's truth, from various Biblical authors**
- **The extent of the neighborhood**
- **Derived summary from the cross**

Truth

- **We must not use “truth” to try to gain superiority**
- **Our fear of false teachers must not distort our view**
- **We don’t want to miss the forest for the trees**
- **We don’t want to clutter up the picture (speck vs beam)**
- **Our view depends on our desires (what we really want)**

Principles vs Rules

- **The Bible Emphasis is on Principles**
- **Rules are founded on Principles**
- **The 10 Commandments are not sufficient to direct us**
- **We add rules because of our lack of understanding**
- **The rules are there to protect us and give us the best life possible**

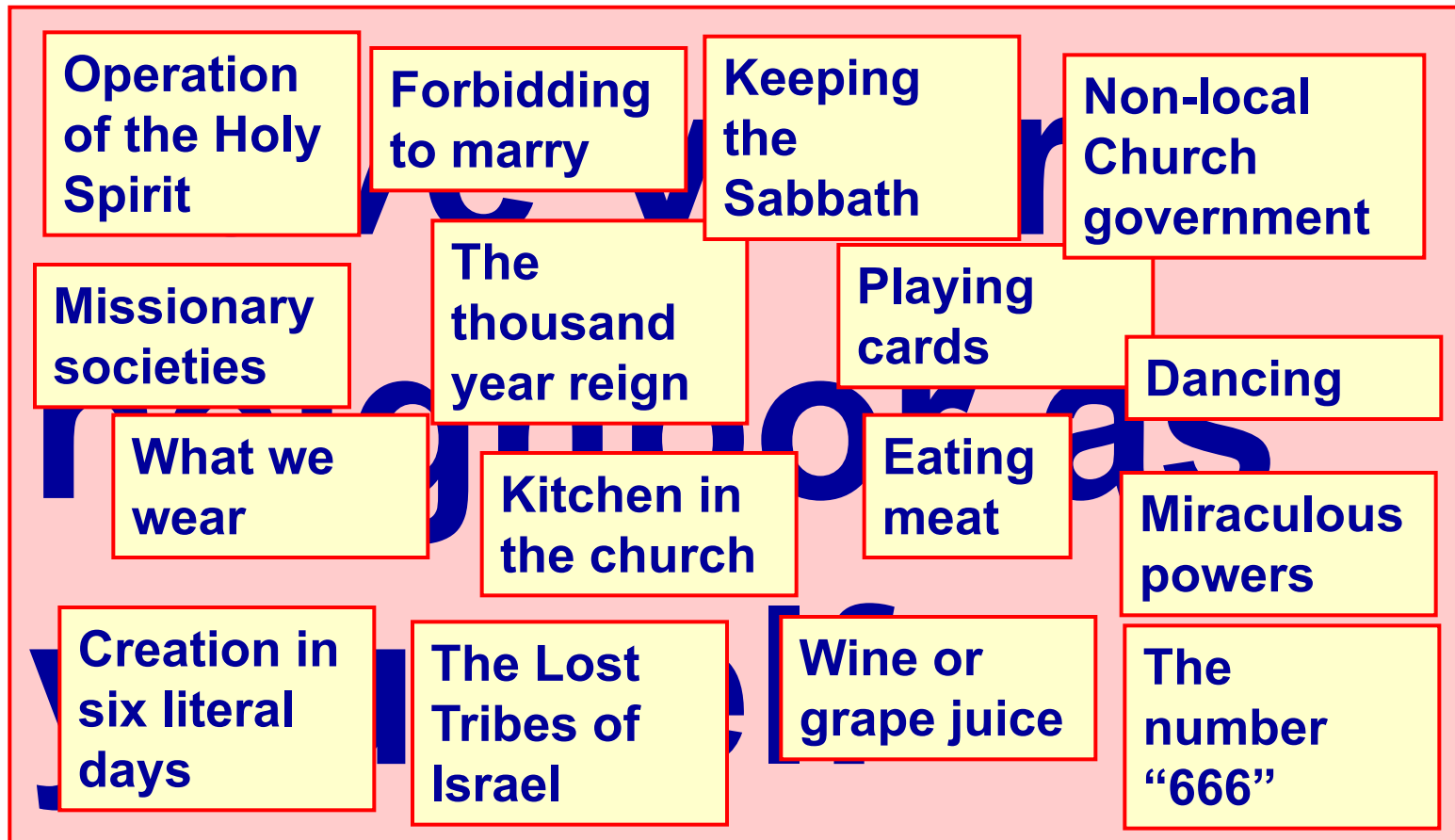
The Principles of God's Law

- **Love God with all of Our Being**
- **Love Good (Hate Evil)**
- **Love All Others as Ourselves**

- **Know God as Creator and Worship Him**
- **Know God's Love for Mankind**
- **Know God's Son as Savior and Worship Him**

- **Respond by trying to be like God (Christ)**

We must not clutter up the picture



Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

Deuteronomy 4:2 (see Revelation 22:18-19)

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Is the Bible Emphasis on Principles or Rules?

Inside, at the heart, NT

Principles: working from general philosophy to determine the right course of action

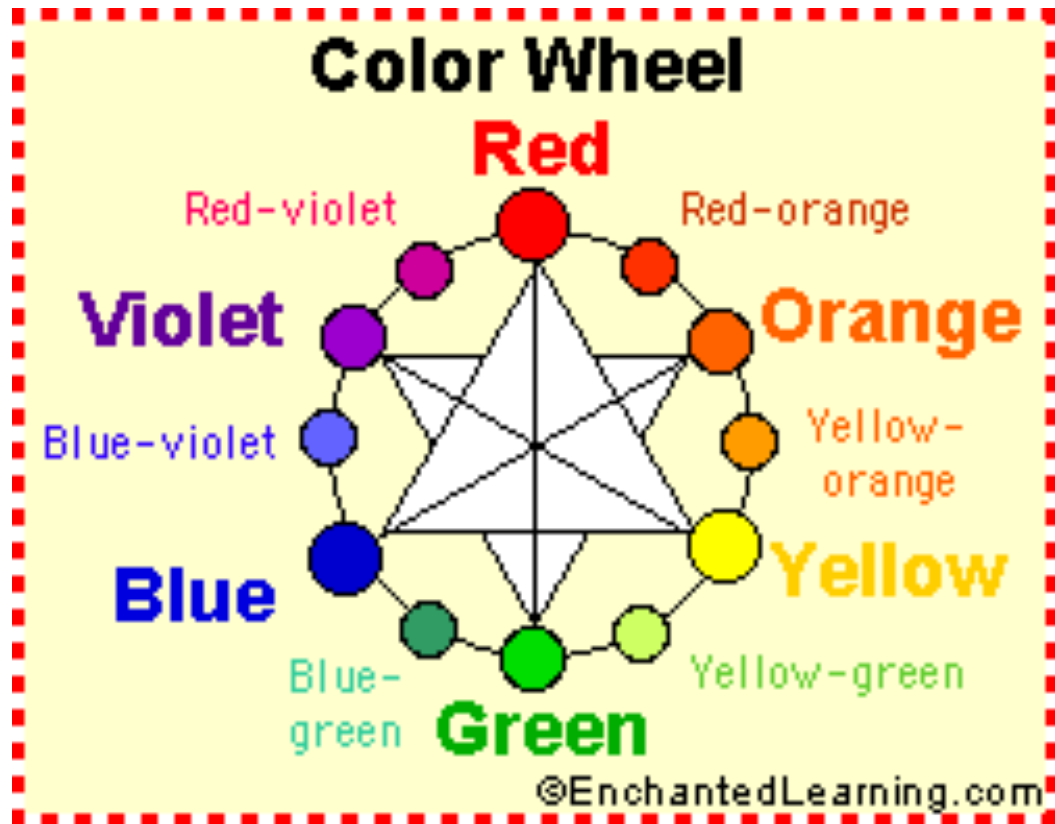
Rules: working from a specific set of rules which set arbitrary limits on actions

Outside, surface, OT

Think about which method produces the best results

Spanning the Space (try it again)

Do the rules cover all of the possibilities?
How do we find the set that is sufficient?



The three primary colors are red, yellow, and blue; they are the only colors that cannot be made by mixing two other colors. Thus, they are all that are needed to make all of the other colors.

We need to think of the fundamentals, like the primary colors!

The Golden Rule (or Principle)

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew 7:12

A practical application of the principle of loving others as much as we do ourselves (the second greatest commandment).

Another Lesson from Dr. Brand

Leprosy Review

- Leprosy is not very contagious
- The problem is that nerves are killed by a germ
- Then there is no feeling pain, no adjustment to injury
- They have no feedback from their hands or feet
- Injured parts of the body remain infected until the body rejects them
- People with this disease have to monitor their bodies carefully for injuries, and not do things that risk injury
- Dr Brand's artificial "pain" system did not work

- Knowledge is not enough: people must believe with all of their heart that doing Good is best for them
- Similarly to Leprosy, we are somewhat insensitive to the pain of others; and thus do not treat them as we should, and we lose them from our body

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Romans 12:15

Example of having the wrong emphasis: Pharisees vs Sadducees

Beliefs of the Pharisees:

- 1) careful observance of the law and many detailed requirements and special interpretations.
- 2) Immortality of soul, resurrection of the body, retribution in future life.
- 3) Belief in angels and spirits.
- 4) God would deliver Israel and restore her to a position of power and prestige.
- 5) Belief in divine providence and freedom of will
- 6) earning merit by observing letter of law

Beliefs of the Sadducees (first five books – Pentateuch)

- 1) No bodily resurrection of dead
- 2) No future rewards or
- 3) No angels or spirits
- 4) fate instead of free will

What did they know about the resurrection?

That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question.

"Teacher," they said, "Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and have children for him.

Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. Finally, the woman died.

Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?"

Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.

At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

Matthew 22:23-30

What about the real question?

But about the resurrection of the dead--have you not read what God said to you,

**'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' ?
He is not the God of the dead but of the living.'**

When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.

Matthew 22:31-34

Pharisees and Sadducees had debated the question of the resurrection for many years; Jesus solves it with a scripture that they both accept, a quote from the Pentateuch.

One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Matthew 22:35-36

Pharisees and Sadducees emphasized details

Pharisees and Sadducees were the 'intellectuals'.

But see how far they missed the point of what they should know and do.

"The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach."

Matthew 23:2-3

“Blind Guides”, “Fools”, and “Hypocrites”

You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.'

Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred?

You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.'

Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it... and by the one who dwells in it.

Mat 23:16 -21

Rules without correct Principles (Money is greater than honesty)

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

Matthew 23:23-24

Do we pursue the smallest detail and make it critical?

Inside vs Outside

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.

In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Matthew 23:25-28

What worship of rules can lead to

(The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?"

He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."

And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!

Mark 7:3-9

What worship of rules can lead to

For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'

But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is **Corban**' (that is, a gift devoted to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother.

Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."

Mark 7:10-13

They ignored one of the ten commandments for their traditions!

Every year we grow, we will find God bigger.

C.S. Lewis

Introduction

- We don't need to have a high IQ to understand
- The “rules” are based on the concept of love
- The “Core” of God's truth
- The extent of the neighborhood
- What we should know from the cross

Truth

- We must not use “truth” to try to gain superiority
- Our fear of false teachers or selfish desires must not distort our view

Principles vs Rules

- **The Bible Emphasis is on Principles**
- **Rules are founded on Principles:**
 - Love God, Good, Man
 - In awe, Worship God
 - Respond in actions
- **The 10 Commandments are not sufficient to direct us**
- **We add rules because of our lack of understanding**
- **The rules are there to protect us and give us the best life possible**
- **Emphasis on rules leads off the track**

Outline of the Class

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This will be very flexible, since I don't know what I am doing!

Is the Bible Emphasis on Principles or Rules?

6

Inside, at the heart, NT

Principles: working from general philosophy to determine the right course of action

Rules: working from a specific set of rules which set arbitrary limits on actions

Outside, surface, OT

Think about which method produces the best results

Emphasize the principle, not the rule

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'

But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

Matthew 5:21 - 24

Other examples in this chapter

You know how it feels!

"Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in Egypt."

Exodus 22:21

Like the Golden Rule – operate from principle!

The greatest works don't mean a thing without love⁶

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

1 Cor 13:1-3

Paul shows us that the externals alone simply don't matter

Acting from the Heart, not the Rules

A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical.

No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code.

Romans 2:28-29

The Spirit must reform our heart so that our knowledge becomes meaningful action

What if Jesus emphasized the “rule”?

What if He had the attitude that He only had to perform the letter of the law?

What if He did the minimum necessary to get His mission accomplished (dying for our sins)?

With this type of attitude He would have made a quick trip; He would have come and gone without developing the personal relationships or living under the same circumstances as us.

The “Corban” attitude would have led Him to think that His work in heaven was too important, and that He didn’t have any time left to give to mankind.

But Jesus truly loved us with all of his nature, and considered us as though we were better than Himself (Phillipians 2:3-8)!

How much do we love the truth (or Good, or God)?

Do we exchange it for something we like better? Romans 1:25

Do we refuse to love it (or do we hate it)? 2 Thessalonians 2:10

Do we suit our own desires, and hear only what pleases us?
2 Timothy 4:3-4

Has our heart has become calloused and insensitive (like stone)?
Isaiah 6:9:10, Matthew 13:14-15, Acts 28:25-27
(see also Ezekiel 36:26)

What do we love more than Goodness and Love?

Jesus spoke in parables to filter out those who really did not want to know the truth.

Wineskins

Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.

"No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse.

Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

Matthew 9:14-17

Jesus advocates flexibility of mind to receive the truth

An Interpretation of the Wineskins

Jesus distinguishes here between something **essential** and **primary** (the wine) and something **secondary** but also **necessary** and **useful** (the wineskins)

There is that which is new and potent and essential - the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And there is that which is secondary, subsidiary, man-made. These are the wineskins, and include traditions, structures and patterns of doing things which have grown up around the gospel

The wineskins are the point of contact between the wine and the world. Wineskins result when the divine gospel touches human culture.

The gospel is new - always ...It seems almost a law that things initially created to aid the gospel eventually become obstacles - old wineskins...(thus) the necessity of new wineskins...

Snyder, The Problem of Wineskins, p.13-16

Knowledge alone is not enough

You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder.

James 2:19

We must agree with it and commit to it as well.

Like the string that holds a string of pearls together, the Spirit working within us puts our knowledge to work to serve God. Without it, the pearls tumble everywhere and are lost.

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.

John 16:13

Parable of the three sons

"What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

"I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

"Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

"Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.

Matthew 21:28-31

What about a third son, who said he would go, and went?

Are we learning formulas or fundamentals?

What is the circumference of a circle?

$$L = \pi d$$

And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it about. (I Kings 7:23)

The “Biblical” value for pi (an approximation) is three.

In 1897 a bill was introduced into the Indiana State Legislature to make the value of pi a rational number. There were several options to choose from (e.g., $16/5 = 3.2$).

It is so easy to get off of the track of truth, and try to twist it to make it easier for us.

**Jim Turner of the Denver Broncos, after being defeated by the Dallas Cowboys in Superbowl XII:
'We were thinking about winning. They were thinking about football.'**

Introduction

- We don't need to have a high IQ to understand
- The “rules” are based on the concept of love
- The extent of the neighborhood

Truth

- We must not use “truth” to try to gain superiority
- False teachers or selfish desires must not distort our view

Principles vs Rules

- The Bible Emphasis is on Principles
- We add rules because of our lack of understanding
- The rules are there to give us the best life possible
- Emphasis on rules leads off the track
- We must love the truth

The purpose of a creed

The whole purpose of a creed is to “lock-in” a particular theological viewpoint, to stand against the eroding tides of shifting fashion.

Ken Gentry in *Yea, Hath God Said?*, p. 137

(the goal of this book is to argue the six-day creation as opposed to the “Framework Hypothesis”, and treats the Westminster Creed with an authority similar to the Bible)

The truth of God (especially the gospel of Christ) is very dynamic, almost explosive, and should not be restricted by man.

The idea of the wineskins means that we should be ready to grow with it and the changes that it makes in our souls.

What should we pursue (or emphasize)?

... the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it.

Why not?

Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone."

As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

Romans 9:30-33

The Jews emphasized the rules rather than principles

Submit to God's righteousness

For I can testify about them [*the Jews*] that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.

Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them."

But the righteousness that is by faith says... "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:3-9

The Jews added to the rules things not based in the principles

Write the law on your hearts

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD.

"I will put my law in their minds and **write it on their hearts.**

I will be their God, and they will be my people."

Jeremiah 31:33

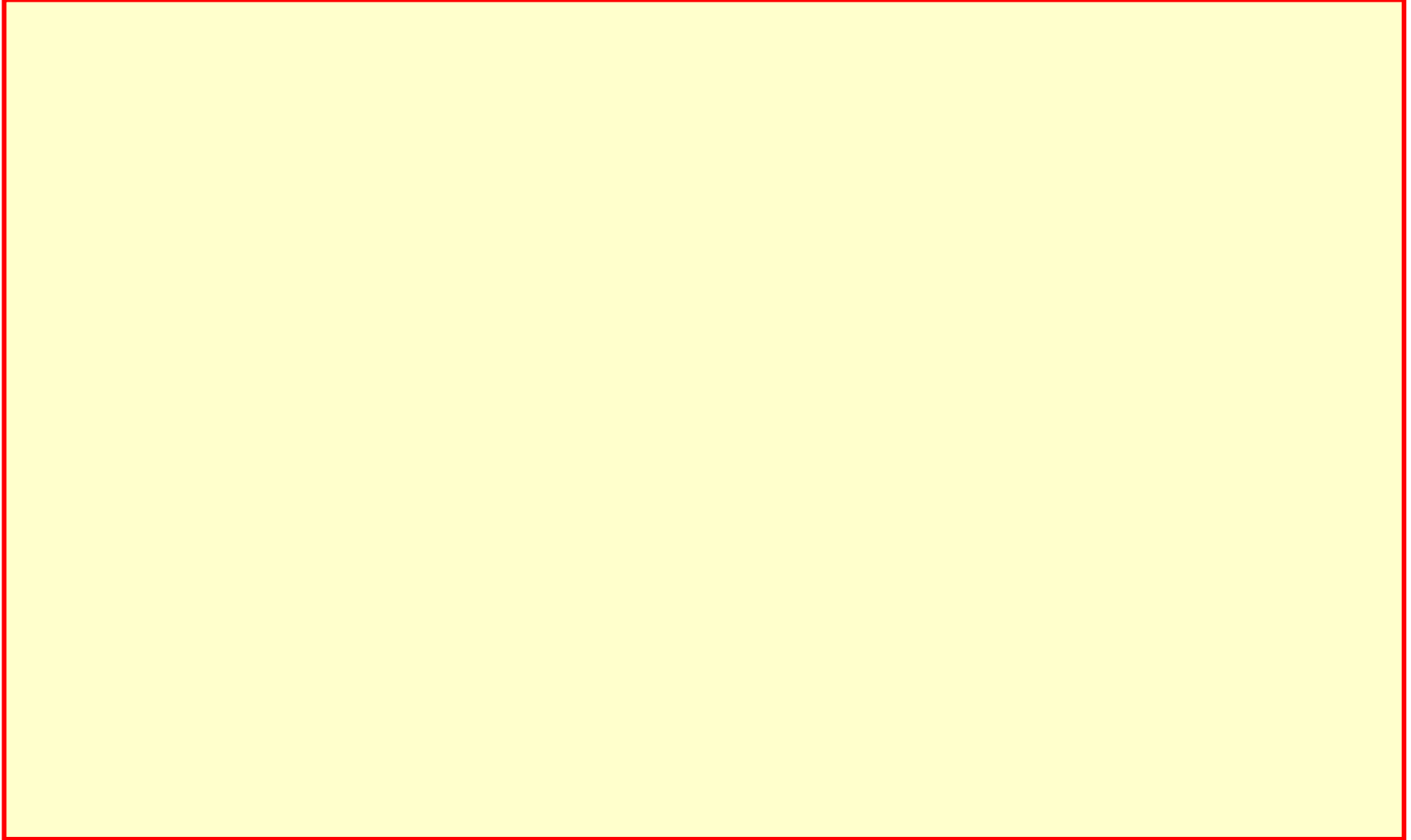
Write the principles on our hearts, not just a set of rules

Outline of the Class

- Introduction
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- Principles vs Rules
- **Particular Issues**
- Fellowship

This will be very flexible, since I don't know what I am doing!

What particular issues would you like to talk about?



Don't assume that I am adequate to deal with these

Distribution of Gambling Fliers

Do we do the same thing?

Jimmy Buffet's song: Fruitcakes

Religion, Religion.

**OH, there's a thin line between Saturday night
and Sunday morning...**

**Where's the church; who took the steeple?
Religion's in the hands of some crazy ole people!
Television preachers with bad hair and dimples,
The God's honest truth is: it's not that simple!**

The Five Steps to Salvation

Hear	Believe	Repent	Confess	Be Baptized
Rom 10:17	Acts 16:30-31	Acts 17:30	Rom 10:8-10	Acts 2:38
Walter Scott				

Acknowledge	Repent	Confess	Believe	Receive
Rom 3:23	Acts 3:19	1 John 1:9	John 3:16	John 1:12
Friendly Temple				

How many other groups use the five finger approach?



At what exact point does God save us?

Would this be different if we had four, or six fingers?

The Method of Baptism

How

1. Nothing (it is purely a spiritual thing)
2. High Humidity
3. Fog
4. Mist
5. Sprinkle
6. Pour
7. Bath
8. Immersion

When

1. Through Mother
2. Infant
3. Small Child
4. Age 13 or over
5. Adult

By whom?

1. Self
2. Non-Christian
3. Christian

Do we know the answers to all of these questions?

The Meaning of Baptism

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

Romans 6:3-5

The meaning is clear, but what if we misunderstand?

Everyone is attracted by bits of it [Christianity] and wants to pick out those bits and leave the rest.

C.S. Lewis

So far...

Introduction

- We don't need to have a high IQ to understand
- The “rules” are based on the concept of love
- We must extend that love to everyone around us

Truth

- We must not use “truth” to try to gain superiority
- False teachers or selfish desires must not distort our view

Principles vs Rules

- The Bible Emphasis is on Principles
- Rules from those principles give us the best life possible
- We add rules because of our lack of understanding
- Emphasis on rules leads off the track
- We must love the truth, and write it on our hearts

The Good Samaritan

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

Luke 10:30ff

The two church people were too mission-oriented

The Samaritan was just interested in Good

Outline of the Class

- Introduction
- “Truth”
- Principles vs Rules
- **Particular Issues**
- Fellowship

This will be very flexible, since I don't know what I am doing!

What particular issues would you like to talk about?⁸

- **Playing Cards**
- **Mixed Bathing**
- **Sabbath Day**
- **Dancing**
- **Marriage and Divorce**

Don't assume that I am adequate to deal with these

Jimmy Buffet's song: Fruitcakes

Courtesy Tim Pauley

Religion, Religion.

**OH, there's a thin line between Saturday night
and Sunday morning...**

**Where's the church; who took the steeple?
Religion's in the hands of some crazy ole people!
Television preachers with bad hair and dimples,
The God's honest truth is: it's not that simple!**

Are we Christians (like Christ) on Saturday night, too?

BC Menorah Cartoon Story

The Bible gives the history of the Jewish nation as a vehicle to bring us Jesus Christ as our Savior.

The Tennessean reportedly dropped the comic strip.

What a great demonstration of the First Amendment!

People just love to pick a fight.

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We have a talent for twisting it (or extending it too far) to suit our purposes.

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How many other groups use the five finger approach?

At what exact point (or instant) does God save us?
 God does not see things in the same temporal senses as us

Would this be different if we had four, or six fingers?

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When

1. Through Mother
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4. Age 13 or over
5. Adult

**By
whom?**

1. Self
2. Non-Christian
3. Christian
4. Ordained minister

**Do we
know the
answers to
all of these
questions?**

Is mere “baptism” safe?

John the Baptist's Baptism:

So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:3-5

Simon the Sorcerer:

Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw...

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!

Acts 8:13, 18-20

The Meaning of Baptism

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

Romans 6:3-5

- A show of commitment
- Lie back and give yourself up to God, rise forward to a new life
- No special power from the baptizer
- A gift is received from the Holy Spirit

The meaning is clear, but what if we misunderstand?

Baptism Passages (1)

Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:12-13 But when they believed ... the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized

Acts 8:16 the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 8:38 Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

Acts 10:47-48 "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Baptism Passages (2)

Acts 11:16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

Acts 16:15 she and the members of her household were baptized...

Acts 16:33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.

Acts 18:8 Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

Acts 19:3-5 Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

Baptism Passages (3)

1 Cor 1:13-17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel--not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

1 Cor 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Gal 3:27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Eph 4:5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

Col 2:12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

1 Pet 3:21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Quote

There is nothing worse than a sharp image of a fuzzy concept.

Ansel Adams



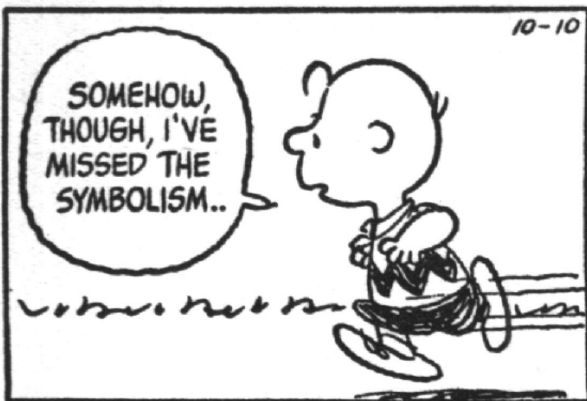
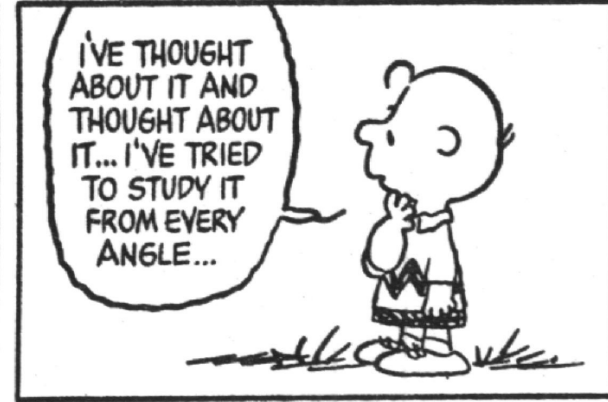
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- **Instrumental Music**
- **Marriage and Divorce**

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Football Follow-up

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I hope that we don't miss the ball!

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1 Pet 3:21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

How does it work?

What does baptism actually do?

- Does it really wash our sins off of our soul?

Why is it a necessary part of having our sins taken away?

- Why does God ask us to do it?

If we don't understand these things, we need to stay humble

The Power of God

Baptism is not a “work” in the sense that we have earned anything.

But it can be accomplished.

Thus, it is not like our general failure to obey God’s commands.

In all respects, we are saved by the power of God.

It is **God’s choice**; He alone (not man) judges us.

We do know that God will be just and fair and loving.

Confidence in Salvation

Do you believe that you will be saved?

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. Ephesians 3:12

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:16

Therefore, brothers, ... we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, Hebrews 10:19

Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God... 1 John 3:21

In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. 1 John 4:17

Our confidence is solely through the Grace of God.

No Confidence in Others' Salvation?

“Only those in the church of Christ will be saved!”

How many times have we heard this?

How good (effective) is this marketing tool?

Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue... John 12:42

But if they have the truth, why is it the case that they are repellent precisely to the degree that they embrace and advertise the truth?

Walker Percy

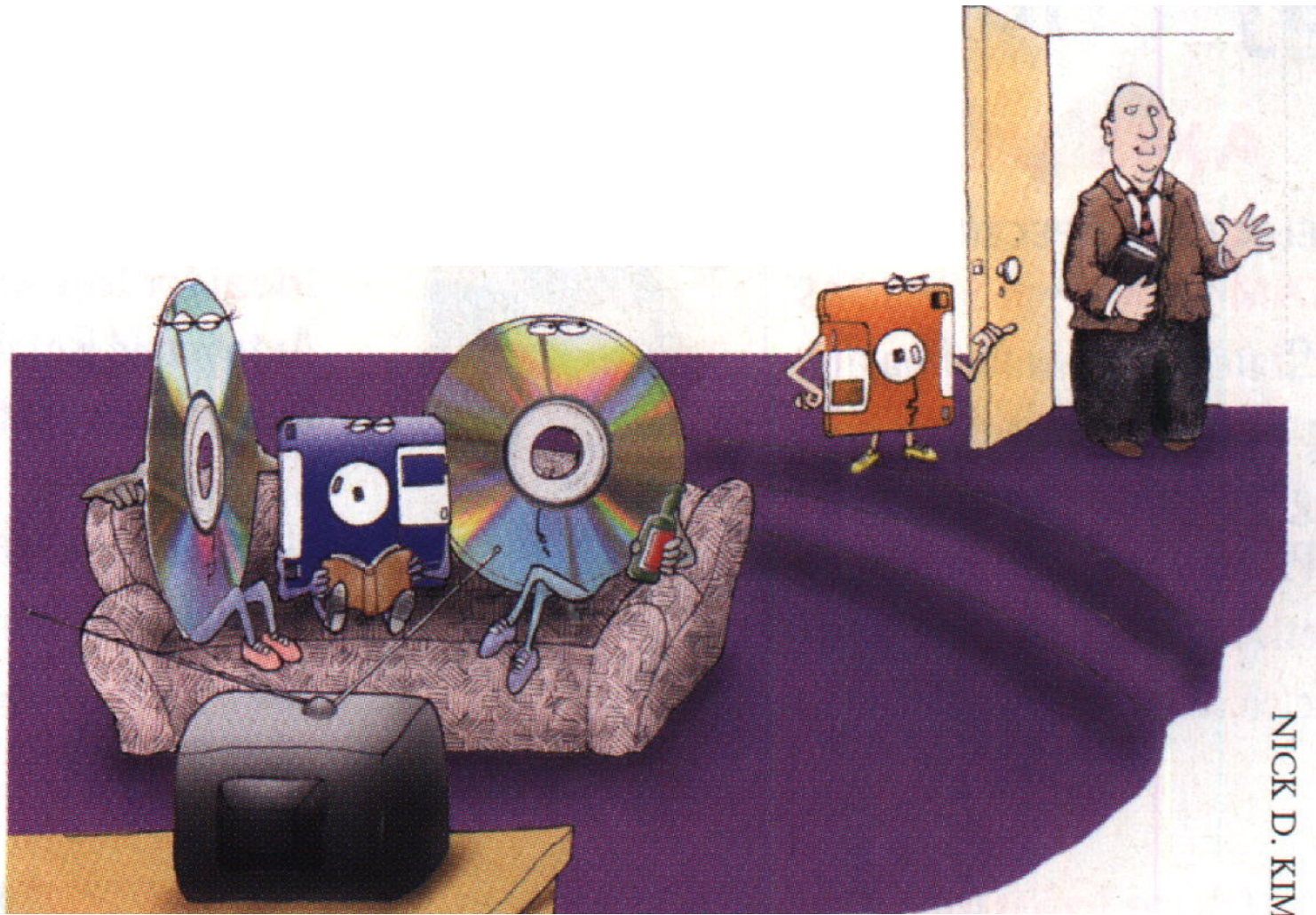
In my own experience, those who strive the hardest and believe the most fervently are sometimes the least attractive persons. Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, they get caught up in competition and end up self-righteous rather than righteous.

Phillip Yancy

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

1 Corinthians 10:12

Are you saved?



"The guy at the door wants to know if we've all been saved...?"

In short, I have little resentment against these particular rules but much resentment about the way they were presented.

Phillip Yancey

So far...

- We don't need to have a high IQ to understand what we must do
 - The Bible Emphasis is on Principles
 - Rules from those principles give us the best life possible
 - The “rules” are based on the concept of love
 - We must extend that love to everyone around us
 - Emphasis on rules leads off the track
 - We add rules because of our lack of understanding
 - We must not use “truth” to try to gain superiority
 - False teachers or selfish desires must not distort our view
 - We must love the truth, and write it on our hearts
-
- We are baptized into the death of Christ, and raised into new life.
 - Knowledge of the exact moment that we are saved is not crucial.
 - Salvation is solely by the power of God
 - We should have confidence in our salvation

The Meaning of Baptism

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

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Persecution for Baptism by Immersion

Those who resisted infant baptism and practiced adult baptism by immersion were persecuted and executed by several groups, including the Roman Catholic church and the followers of Ulrich Zwingli.

Many were drowned, ironically called a “third baptism”.

There is no limit to how far man can pervert God's word.

Letter from a local Church of Christ minister:

- when money talks, morality walks
- businesses, law enforcement promoted this indecency
- compares being 'put on the map' to Sodom and Gomorrah
- setting a bad example for the children
- quotes scripture
 - 1 Timothy 6:10 (love of money the root of all evil)
 - Isaiah 5:20 (calling evil good and good evil)
 - Matthew 16:16 (what will you give in exchange for your soul?)

Letter from a local citizen:

- visitors made the most of a frustrating situation
- 15 arrests out of the 80 to 100 thousand there
- preacher should have made the most of the situation, too
- he could have interacted with them and even saved a few souls
- better to accept people for their differences

This is they type of thing that we have to overcome.

Three Restoration Sayings

**Speak where the Bible speaks, and
Be silent where the Bible is silent!**

Thomas Campbell

**In faith, unity; in opinions, liberty; in all things
charity.**

Thomas Campbell

**While we claim to be Christians only, we do not
claim to be the only Christians.**

unknown

These are good principles, if followed completely.

The Church of Christ emphasis was:

**Speak where the Bible speaks, and
Be silent where the Bible is silent!**

This is so similar to our promise in court to speak:

The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!

This is a good principle, but do we actually follow this?
Or do we use it to promote our opinion?

We follow it only as far as we want to!
We must keep it all of the way, like keeping all of the law

The whole law

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right.

But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

James 2:8-13

We have all broken the law: all of it!

Who is the biggest sinner?

This is not a contest.

We are all sinners, and so are all unworthy.

We are capable of any sin, though we haven't committed them all.

We are like two specks from God's point of view.

We must all be forgiven.

The story of the woman caught in adultery

John 8:7-9

Why did not her accusers stay?

They were made to realize that their sins were just as significant

Christians are not better than others, they are just forgiven.

The woman caught in the act of adultery:

When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.

John 8:7-9

Would we have crucified Christ?

If we emphasized rules over principles, we probably would have.

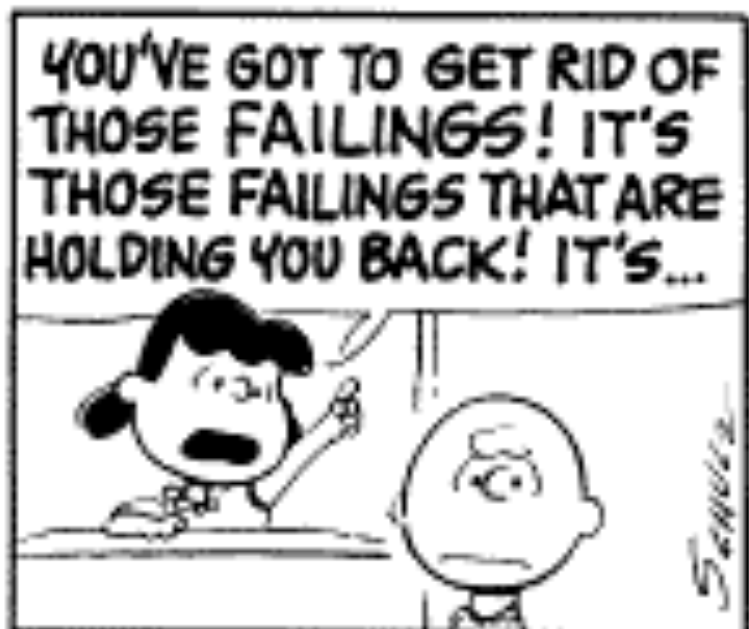
Hopefully, as we get older, we would grow out of it.

God will have to forgive each of us for a great deal.

He will look more favorably at me if I show tolerance rather than condemnation.

I would prefer be more “forgiving” than God rather than more condemning.

How precise do we need to be?



What the Bible says about Salvation (1)

He who stands firm to the end will be saved

Matthew 10:22, Matthew 24:13, Mark 13:13

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Mark 16:16

... the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of sins

Luke 1:77

Your faith has saved you

Luke 7:50

Enter through Christ (the gate)

John 10:9

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved

Acts 2:21

There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved

Acts 4:12

What the Bible says about Salvation (2)

He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved Acts 11:14

It is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved... Acts 15:11

I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes Romans 1:16

Saved through him (Christ) Romans 5:9

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. 1 Corinthians 15:2

What the Bible says about Salvation (3)

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation
2 Corinthians 7:10

The word of truth, the gospel of your salvation
Ephesians 1:13

By grace you have been saved
Ephesians 2:5 & 8

Work out your salvation with fear and trembling
Phillipians 2:12

They refused to love the truth and so be saved
2 Thessalonians 2:10

God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of
the Spirit and through belief in the truth
2 Thessalonians 2:13

What the Bible says about Salvation (4)

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:16

Who has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. 2 Timothy 1:9

... the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus 2 Timothy 3:15

the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men Titus 2:11

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5

What the Bible says about Salvation (5)

He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Hebrews 7:25

... accept the word planted in you, which can save you

James 1:21

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation...

1 Peter 2:2

Summary of things needed for Salvation

Stand firm to the end	belief
forgiveness of sins	faith
enter through Christ	repentance
call on the name of Christ	love the truth
gospel (holy Scriptures)	grace of Jesus
confess that Jesus is Lord	work out salvation
hold firmly to the word	God's mercy
sanctifying work of the Spirit	washing of rebirth
renewal by the Holy Spirit	spiritual milk
intercession by Christ	baptism

**Everything must be included to achieve the right results;
like a chemical reaction or baking a cake**

Is it too hard to do?

... obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach.

Deuteronomy 30:10-11

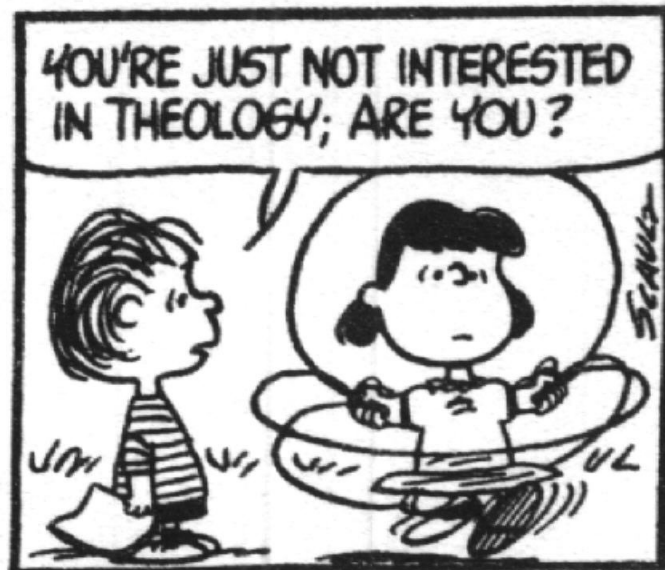
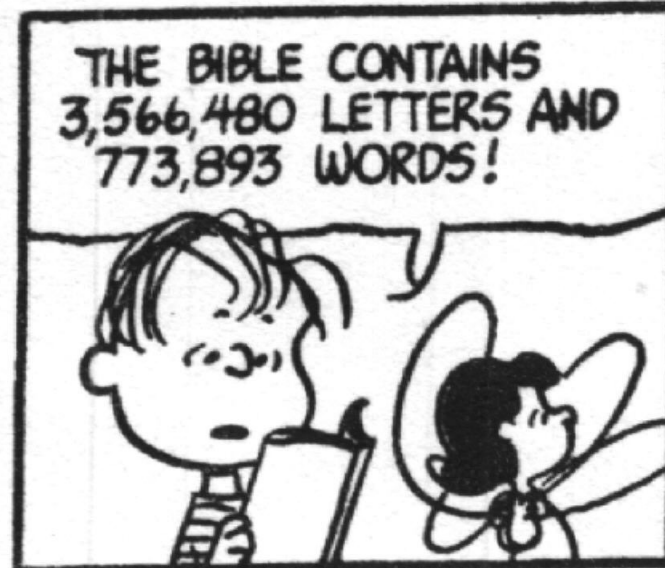
This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.

This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome...

1 John 5:2-3

Doing Good is the easiest way to live.

Knowing the Facts



... is not enough

Modern progress has made the world a neighborhood; God has given us the task of making it a brotherhood.

William Barclay

We will win the world when we realize that fellowship, not evangelism, must be our primary emphasis.

Howard Snyder

So far...

- **We don't need to have a high IQ to understand what we must do**
- **The Bible Emphasis is on Principles**
- **The rules, based on love, give us the best life possible**
- **We must extend that love to everyone around us**
- **Emphasis on rules leads off the track (added rules, etc)**
- **We must not use "truth" to try to gain superiority**
- **False teachers or selfish desires must not distort our view**
- **We must love the truth, and write it on our hearts**

- **We are baptized into the death of Christ, and raised into new life.**
- **Knowledge of the exact moment that we are saved is not crucial.**
- **We should have confidence in our salvation (due to God's grace)**
- **Look at the entire list of ideas associated with salvation**

Who among us is the biggest sinner?

This is not a contest.

We are all sinners, and so are all unworthy.

We are capable of any sin, though we haven't committed them all.

We are like two specks from God's point of view.

We must all be forgiven.

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Your faith has saved you Luke 7:50

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved Acts 2:21

It is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved... Acts 15:11

Saved through him (Christ) Romans 5:9

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

Work out your salvation with fear and trembling Philippians 2:12

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intercession by Christ	baptism

**Everything must be included to achieve the right results;
like a chemical reaction or baking a cake**

Are we trying to minimize the truth?

The desire to capture the fundamentals does not mean that we are wanting to ignore parts of the truth. We just want to make sure that we don't miss the point.

... you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

Matthew 23:23

Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

Romans 3:31

We grasp the whole truth by understanding the fundamentals.

Is it too hard to do?

... obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach.

Deuteronomy 30:10-11

This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.

This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome...

1 John 5:2-3

Doing Good is the easiest way to live.

Mixing Milk and Meat (1)

"Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk.

Exodus 23:19, 34:26; Deuteronomy 14:21

Similar: (Lev 22:28 NIV) Do not slaughter a cow or a sheep and its young on the same day.

Look at the problems emphasis on this caused

Mixing Milk and Meat (2)

The Oral law expands this to the complete separation of milk and meat, and the Rabbis in the Talmud extend this to include bird meat (birds do not give milk, but this makes it less confusing!)

No meat product can come in contact with any milk product in any way. There must be separate utensils and dishes for each type of food. Many have separate condiments to avoid mixing.

Meat and milk cannot be eaten together. There is a waiting period (depending on your tradition) of 70 minutes to 6 hours after eating meat before it is permissible to eat milk products. But you can eat milk products first, then eat meat.

It is permissible for two people to eat together, one eating one type, and the second eating the other type, as long as there is a definite separation between the two.

Look at the expansion of the set of rules.

Mixing Milk and Meat (3)

They believe that you should not cook, eat, or benefit in any way from the mixture of meat and milk products.

They cannot even buy a cheeseburger for a non-Jewish friend.

These rules only apply to meat from clean animals, so they can buy their non-Jewish friend a ham and cheese sandwich instead.

Milk and meat that are accidentally mixed – but not cooked – can be sold or given away.

Milk and meat that are mixed and cooked must be thrown out.

Is this really what God wanted?

Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard.

Leviticus 19:27

You are the children of the LORD your God. Do not cut yourselves or shave the front of your heads for the dead,

Deuteronomy 14:1

Does God not like certain hair styles?

Or is there something else going on here?

Many “rules” reflect the times, especially with regard to idolatry.

Many Jewish groups believe that it is ok to use scissors or an electric razor because they use two blades

Don't go too far!

I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "**Do not go beyond what is written.**" Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.

1 Corinthians 4:3-6

We must stay within the scope of what God wants.

Don't add or subtract!

Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

Deuteronomy 4:2

See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.

Deuteronomy 12:32

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.

And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Revelation 22:18-9

We must let God speak for Himself.

Don't judge others!

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Matthew 7:1

The speck / plank image puts things into proper perspective

Marriage and Divorce Indoctrination

We have basically been brought up to believe that divorce was unforgivable.

Those who are divorced (and remarried) were forced to live their lives with absolutely no hope or fellowship; thinking that they are going to hell.

It is very easy or “clinical” to have this opinion from the outside looking in.

But, believe me, you have a different perspective when it happens to you!

Marriage and Divorce Scripture (1)

Remember that Jesus is speaking to men, and we must fill in for the woman's side of this

"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

Matthew 5:31-2

Is this “adultery” merely the act of being divorced or the potential outcome if there is remarriage?

Is it a one-time breaking of a covenant, or a state of continual sin from which you cannot escape?

Marriage and Divorce Scripture (2)

Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

principle!

"Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"

Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

Matthew 19:3-9

Our hearts are just as hard today!

Marriage and Divorce Legal Summary

Not including the “not under bondage” passage (1 Corinthians 7)

In Summary:

If you divorce your spouse (except for marital unfaithfulness):

**They become an adulterer (assuming they get married?),
Whoever marries them becomes an adulterer, and
You commit adultery if you marry again.**

So, everybody is lost!

**We fail in our weakness when our marriages fall apart.
I feel this failure even though I wasn't unfaithful.**

Thank God that His Grace covers this weakness, too!

God Hates Divorce! (Malachi 2:16)

Well, so do I!

Anyone who has been there hates it!

God has also been there!

This is what the LORD says [to Israel]: "Where is your mother's certificate of divorce with which I sent her away? Or to which of my creditors did I sell you? Because of your sins you were sold; because of your transgressions your mother was sent away.

Isaiah 50:1

I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries.

Jeremiah 3:8

Most people don't realize that God is divorced, too!

Does God ever demand divorce?

Ezra thought so

Israel and Judah were taken into captivity because of their continual disobedience to God's laws.

Ezra worked after the captivity to re-establish the Jewish nation.

He returned to a land where God's laws about interacting with other cultures had been ignored.

Ezra becomes very upset, and humbly prays to God for his nation's guilt.

[Ezra 9:3-15](#)

Shecaniah suggests that they "put away" their foreign wives (children were involved), and Ezra supports this. Most of the assembly agrees. [Ezra 10:2-4](#), [Ezra 10:11-15](#)

All those who do not are disfellowshipped. [Ezra 10:8](#)

Did God demand this? (show the scripture)

Or was this a reaction to laws already broken?

Did God really want these covenants to be broken, too?

God upheld even a "wrong" covenant (Joshua 9)

**The Pharisees were preoccupied with the grounds for divorce;
Jesus with the institution of marriage.**

R. W. Scott

So far...

- **We don't need to have a high IQ to understand what we must do**
 - **The Bible Emphasis is on Principles**
 - **The rules, based on love, give us the best life possible**
 - **We must extend that love to everyone around us**
 - **Emphasis on rules leads off the track (added rules, etc)**
 - **We must not use "truth" to try to gain superiority**
 - **False teachers or selfish desires must not distort our view**
 - **We must love the truth, and write it on our hearts**
 - **We are not trying to minimize it, but to better understand it.**
 - **It is not impossible to live the life God wants us to.**
 - **We are not in a position to judge others.**
- **We are baptized into the death of Christ, and raised into new life.**
 - **We should have confidence in our salvation (due to God's grace)**
 - **Look at the entire list of ideas associated with salvation**

Straining to be righteous

You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

Matthew 23:24

We get blinded if we look too close.

Marriage and Divorce Indoctrination

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Do we over-react to our guilt?

Ezra and the people of Judah were humbled by their sin.

But their reaction may have gone too far. This is also reflected in the way the Pharisees became so legalistic.

The sinful nations of Israel and Judah were not carried away because they were not perfectly obedient. They were carried away because they weren't even trying. They didn't care what God wanted.

They missed the principle, but could only see their failure in terms of the rules. They attempted to fix the outside when the inside was the problem.

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Matthew 23:25

God cares about the kind of inside which makes the outside right.

Murder vs Adultery

For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

James 2:11

Watch against the mentality that says that we can be forgiven for murder, but not adultery (or divorce)

There is also the philosophy that a couple can "separate" without getting a divorce and avoid the whole problem of guilt.

And there are many marriages that are emotionally and spiritually broken, even if they are still good on paper.

God hates it when a contract of any kind is broken.

“married in the sight of God”

Where did we get this idea?

If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

This seems to go against the idea that we are married in the sight of God to whoever we married first.

Would God bless a union based on adultery?

12

Look at the story of David and Bathsheba:

David committed adultery with Bathsheba

Bathsheba became pregnant

David had Bathsheba's husband killed

David married Bathsheba

The child was born, but got sick and died

Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and lay with her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The LORD loved him; and because the LORD loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah.

2 Sam 12:24-25

The next king, Solomon, came from this marriage, not David's others.

The key questions

If you suffer a divorce and then remarry, are you removed from the pool of Grace?

Can the blood of Jesus Christ not save you anymore?

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-9

We cannot be separated except by our own turning away.

Feelings of Inadequacy

Those who are divorced tend to feel that we are totally unworthy of taking any leadership part in the church because of our failure and the way others may look at it.

This is completely normal.

All I know to tell you is to let Grace make you whole again.

God uses even the broken pieces to perform miracles.

How often should we hold the Lord's communion?¹²

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

(1 Cor 11:23-6 NIV)

Some perform this yearly (at Passover), some quarterly (so that it does not become too routine), some every Lord's Day.

**Why would we not want to take part in this fellowship frequently?
Why do we want to put off remembering the Lord's sacrifice?**

Why has this been such a popular topic?

Because it is easier to attack this than real sin.

Because it isolates us from the “sinners” who do not believe like we do.

Why have we had to listen to so many sermons on instrumental music, and so few on loving your neighbor?

It is in our power to correct this.

David told the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brothers as singers to sing joyful songs, accompanied by musical instruments: lyres, harps and cymbals.

1 Chronicles 15:16

So the Levites stood ready with David's instruments, and the priests with their trumpets.

2 Chronicles 29:26

The Israelites who were present in Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great rejoicing, while the Levites and priests sang to the LORD every day, accompanied by the Lord's instruments of praise.

2 Chronicles 30:21

David made the instrumental accompaniment part of his worship

How can we sing a Psalm such as Psalm 98 but not be able to do what it says?

Bob Brinkmann

Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him...

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn-- shout for joy before the LORD, the King.

Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy...

Psalm 98

David makes the whole earth an instrument of praise

Music in the New Testament

So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.

1 Corinthians 14:15

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord...

Ephesians 5:19

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16

Remember that the early Christians were being persecuted and were not likely to worry about carrying around instruments.

The emphasis is on what we think and feel as we worship

Music in the New Testament

And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Revelation 5:8-9

And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb...

Revelation 15:2-3

Were they just holding the harp for looks?

What is True Worship?

People argue against instrumental music as if we were substituting it for actual worship. This does not make sense to me.

Instrumental music can not in any way be thought of as worship.

Some argue that it is like an attempt to exchange one drug (which is effective) for another (which is not). In truth it is more like the water you swallow to help the pill go down.

Some say that it is the same as substituting buttermilk for the fruit of the vine during communion, that it like the strange fire brought by Nadab and Abihu (Numbers 3:4).

Worship is unpleasing to God when it centers on one's self.

What does God hear?

What is music to God anyway?

Perhaps he filters all that out so that he can experience our true worship, like tearing off the wrapping paper to get to the real present.

Are the actual notes sacred, too? Should we be chanting like they did in the first century?

Why would the physical sound meaning anything to the Creator of the universe?

If we are singing praises and someone starts playing the piano, have we suddenly transitioned from worship to sin?

Worship from the Heart

I do not advocate using an instrument to aid our worship.

We do not need it if we truly worship from the heart.

But we must not hold this as a rule of fellowship (or disfellowship).

We must be very careful in how we view our fellowship.

One method of deciding what is right (Hurley)

1. Scriptural instructions:

- a. Does Scripture expressly prohibit the activity?
- b. Does Scripture expressly permit the activity?

2. Realities and definitions:

- a. Does the activity effectively overthrow a biblical norm, but escape censure on a technicality of definition?
- b. Is the activity in fact in keeping with the obvious purpose of scripture, but prevented by a technicality of human definition?

3. Perceptions:

- a. Is the activity likely to be misunderstood or perceived in such a way that it leads to confusion or becomes a stumblingblock?
- b. Can the activity be explained sufficiently that it is not likely to be wrongly perceived or to become a stumbling block?

Is our interpretation mobilizing or confining?

Outline of the Class

- Introduction
- “Truth”
- Principles vs Rules
- Particular Issues
- **Fellowship**

This will be very flexible, since I don't know what I am doing!

The disciples of discoverers

We owe much to the early Restoration Movement.

But, as Daniel Boorstin says, “The disciples of discoverers are enemies of discovery.”

With Socrates, Jesus, and the Restorers, the initial burst of newness eventually became crystallized and ineffective.

The first generation has the vision of something different, and is bound together by strong ties of fellowship and unity of purpose.

The second generation is made up of the children of the founders, who grow up within the framework of the new institution. They acquire the vision secondhand.

The third, fourth, and fifth generations become the new “establishment”, which is now the path of least resistance.

We must not lose the vitality of the gospel of Christ.

The Condition of the Restoration Movement

Its thrust has changed from biblical connection with the gospel to a connection with its own history.

The goal now is to preserve the status quo.

A characteristic of members of churches of Christ in recent years has been the inability to disagree without building walls.

Matters of judgment (i.e., human opinion) have been exalted to tests of fellowship.

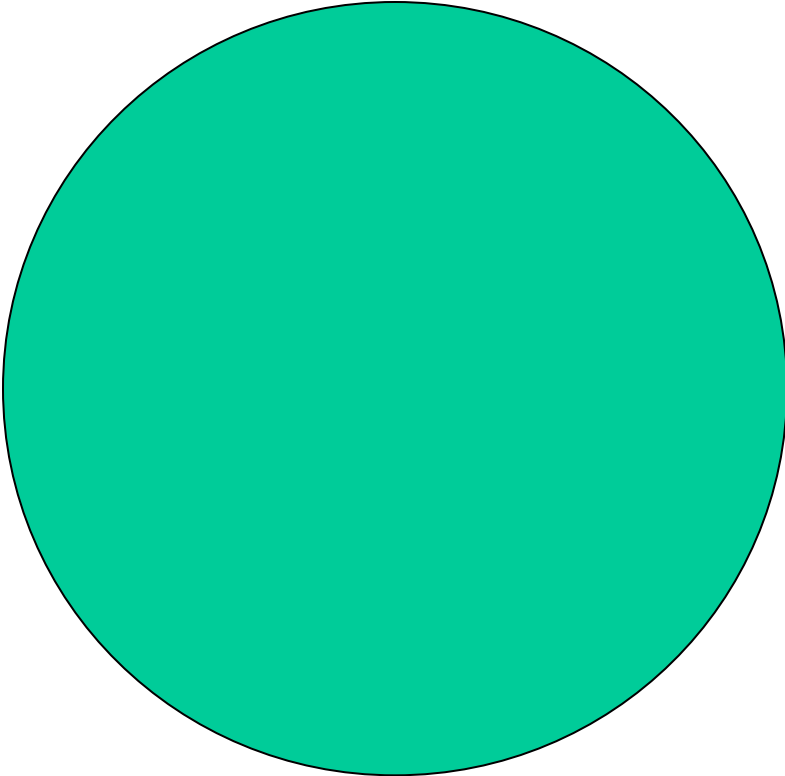
In recapturing the spirit of the Restoration, people will find themselves fighting against what was once their own heritage.

Rubel Shelley (paraphrased)

What is sacred to us? The true church?

Or the history of how the Restoration worked to bring it back?

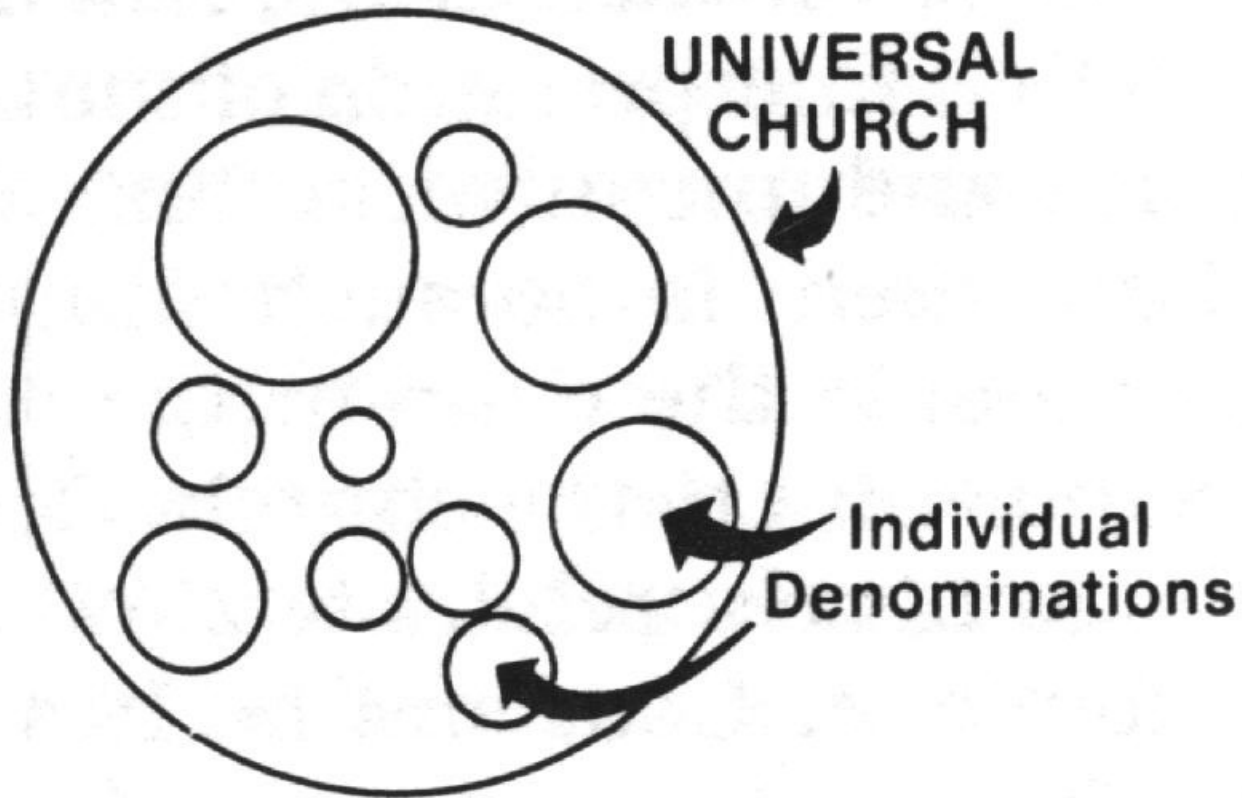
View 1 of the church fellowship (from Shelley)



All-in-one View

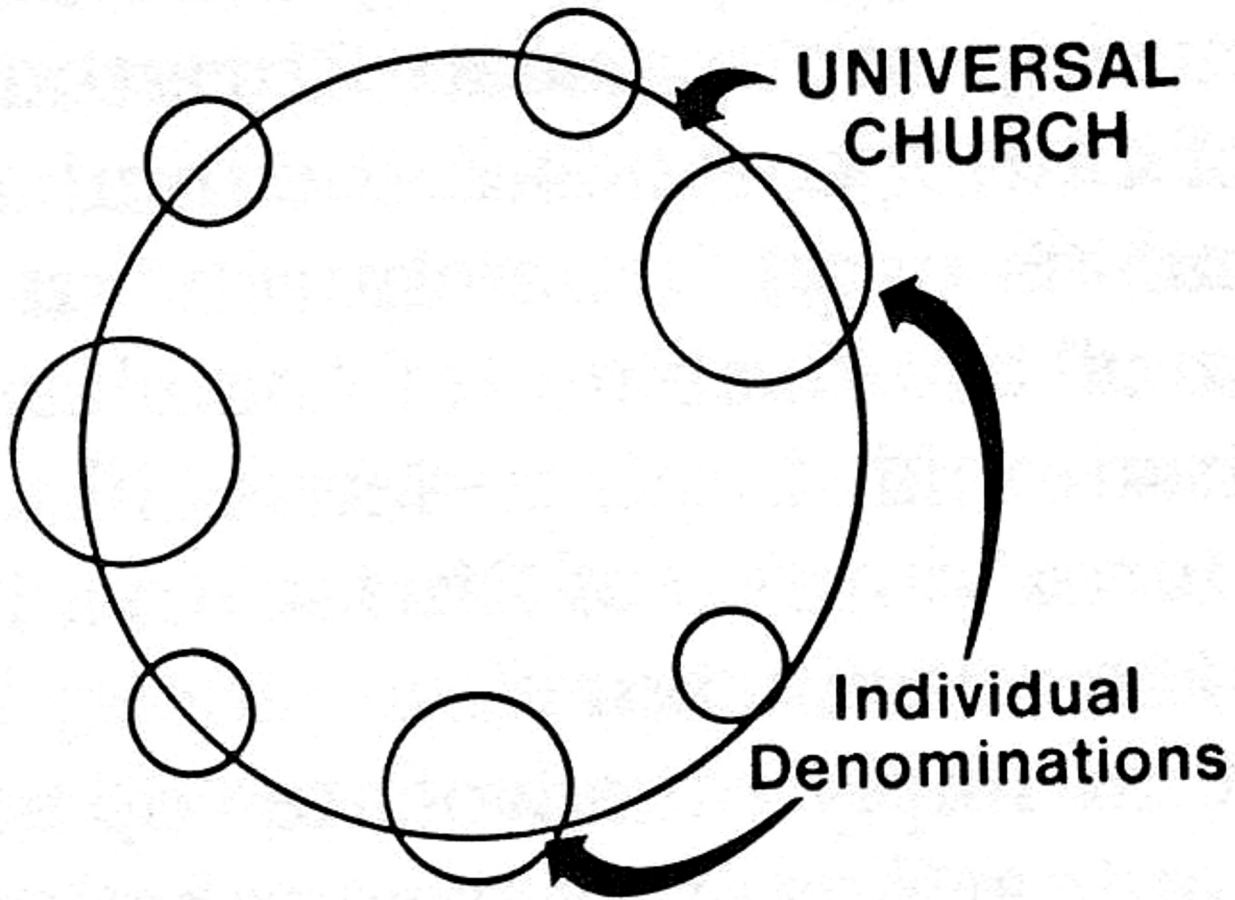
View 1 of the church fellowship (from Shelley)

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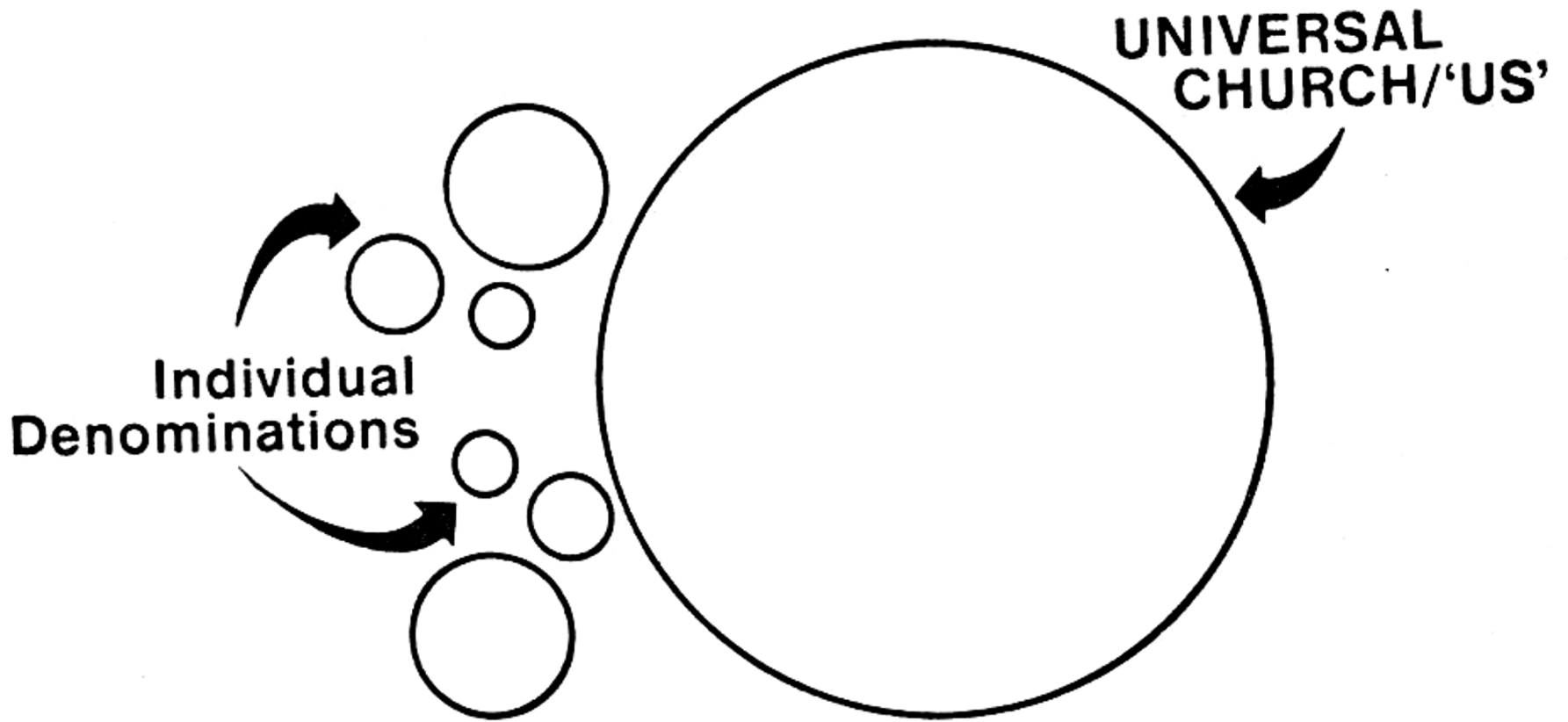
All-in-one View

View 2 of the church fellowship (from Shelley)



Some-of-all-in-one View

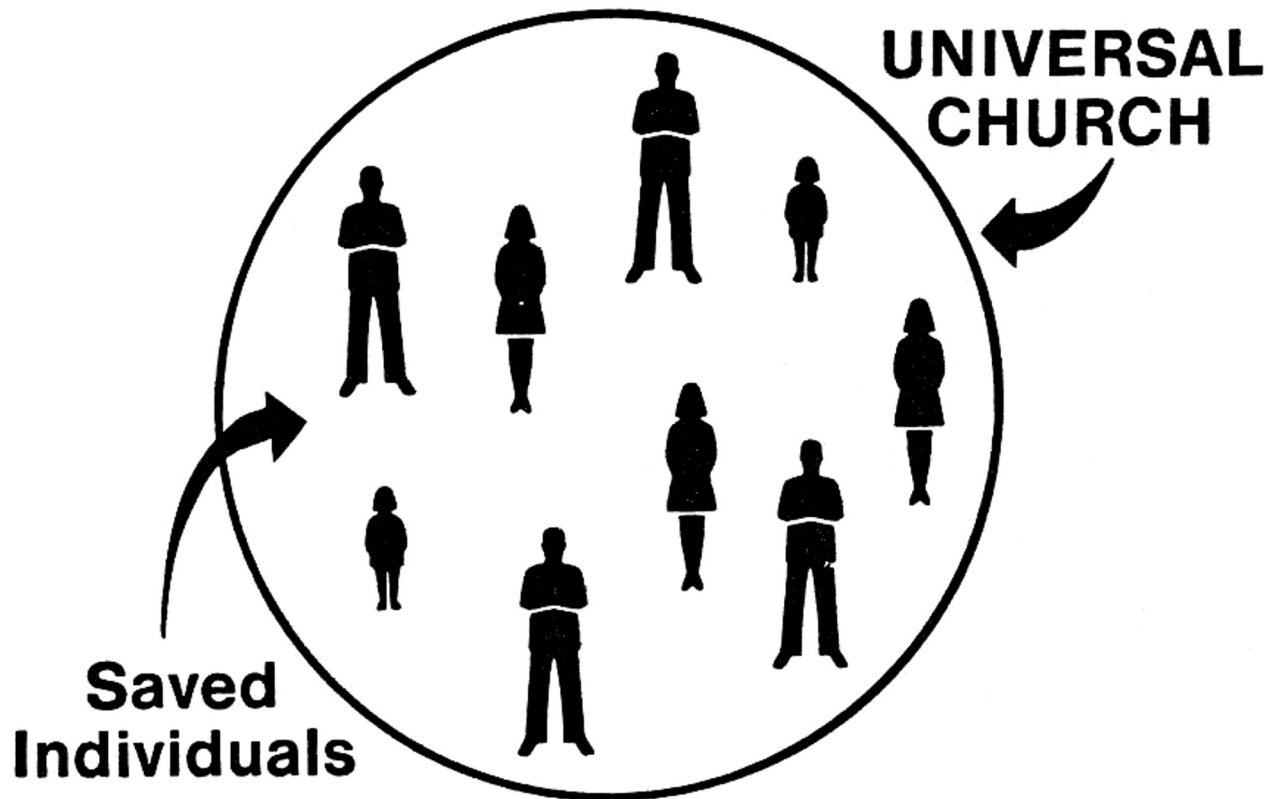
View 3 of the church fellowship (from Shelley) 13



Us-all-and-only-us View

View 4 of the church fellowship (from Shelley)

13



We will be saved individually, personally, as members that have been added to the church.

All-the-saved View

The “purity” of the church

...you can't develop an appreciation for Jesus Christ by using your Bible as a handbook on denominational doctrines.

Jim McGuiggan

In our efforts to purify, we have pressed our interpretations and scruples to the point of dividing.

So we attempt to purify the church by division, by separating from, or driving out, those who disagree.

By this method we start another “pure” church each decade or so.

Cecil Hook

We even disfellowship whole congregations.

The plea of F. D. Srygley

We are in favor of giving everybody room to think and liberty to speak for himself.

... I am opposed to any institution that allows no one but the bosses and grand moguls to entertain an idea or express an opinion.

It is wrong to make anything a condition of fellowship which is not essential to salvation.

It is not so much the fact that we do things differently, but that we dispute about it, and refuse each other fellowship.

Putting aside our differences...



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Those who were not wanted

We are fighting a war against an ethnic cleanser.

Are we spiritual “cleansers”, rejecting people we don’t want?

Jonah was this type of evangelist.

He did not want God to save the Ninevites.

We must base our test of fellowship only on the heart!

What is our strategy for fellowship with others? ¹³

It seems clear that those of us in the church may actually be following a 'strategy of defeat' while we are convinced that we are following a 'strategy of victory'...the only strategy of victory entails a proper balance between truth and love.

Thomas Warren

(We must)...approach the problem with a desire to solve it, rather than a desire to win.

Francis Schaeffer

The concept of fellowship has nothing to do with competition!

The only way to win is to be part of the body of Christ.

Putting up fences and walls

We have come to the point where practically everyone who professes Christianity has to have another 'label' for identification purposes.

Rubel Shelley

... those who stand for undenominational Christianity have no control over the spiritual fences built by others.

Monroe Hawley

But can control the spiritual fences we put up ourselves.

We are always looking for a seam, a separation or discrimination line to show us where everyone stands, so that we can judge if they are saved.

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. [Ephesians 2:14-15](#)

Since Christ tore the great partition down, we have been building many more back up, so that our concept of the truth looks like a complex maze.

Christ came to tear down the walls that stand between us!

There are some books I don't recommend

... we will not extend our fellowship to include those who practice it or teach it or even who believe it to be true.

...we have the truth of God...

...when men begin to teach and to practice that which is in error, I do not have fellowship with them, I don't care if they have been baptized... for the remission of their sins... they may call themselves an erring child of God; I say they are out of fellowship with me...

... this old foolishness about every time a man has been baptized, and because he claims to be a child of God I automatically open the arms of fellowship, is foreign to the New Testament teaching on fellowship.

We cannot fellowship any man that teaches anything untrue.

(those who don't attend except Sunday morning) I deny vehemently that they have the spirit of Christ.

Andrew Connaly, The Dangers of Liberalism

What are valid tests of fellowship?

How much did those who were added to the church in Acts 2 know about what we now use as tests of fellowship?

How about the Philip with the Eunuch?

It is just as great a sin to make an optional matter binding as it is to make a required matter optional.

J.D. Thomas

How do we decide what sins are “dis-fellowshipping” sins, and which are not?

We need much more information (revelation) to be justified in being as inflexible as we are.

We can't just block out those we don't want

We are currently fighting a war against an ethnic cleanser.

Are we spiritual “cleansers”, rejecting people we don't want?

Jonah was this type of evangelist.

He did not want God to save the Ninevites, and risked his life to avoid preaching to them.

The older brother did not want the Prodigal Son blessed by his father ([Luke 15](#)).

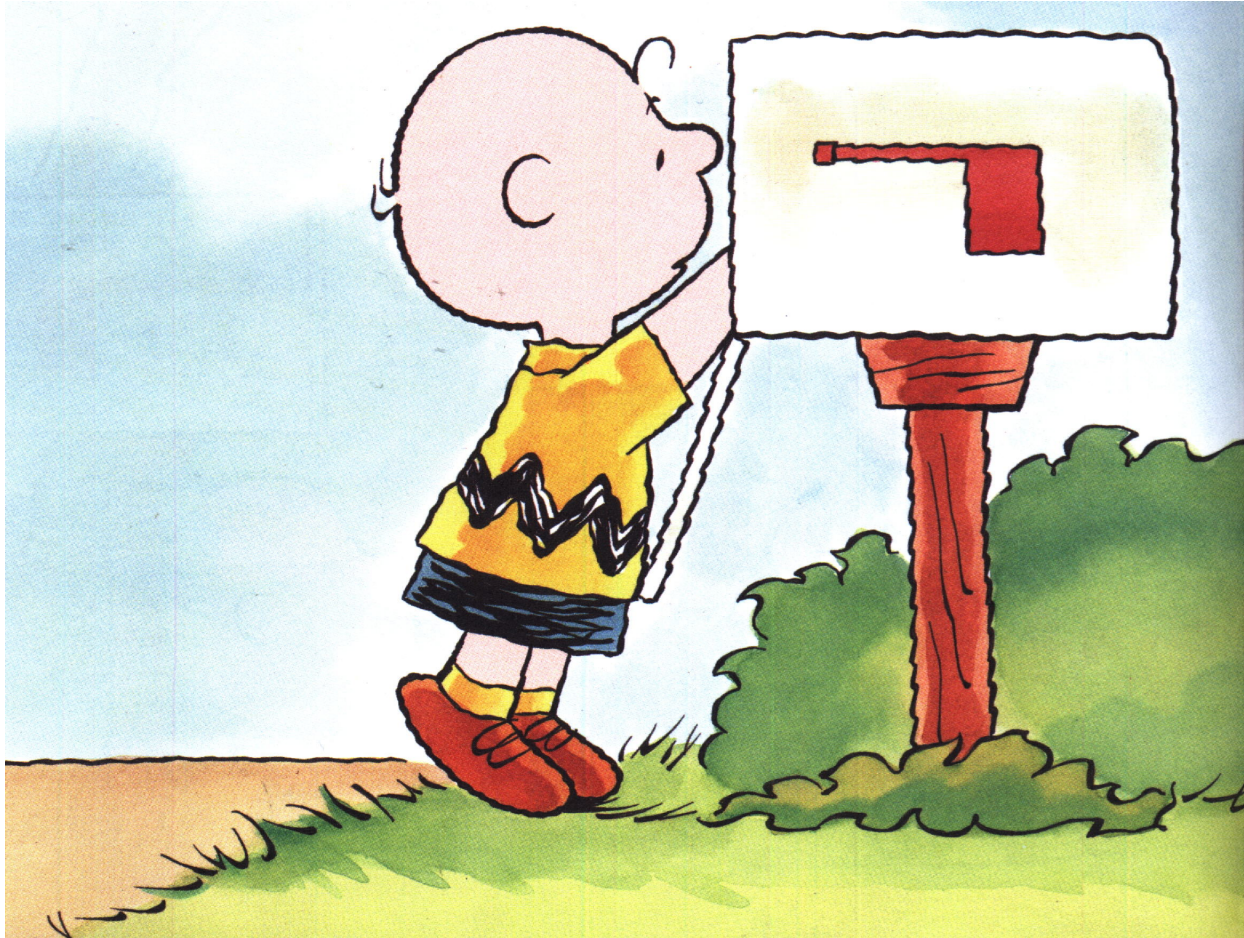
Paul was a totally different type of evangelist.

”For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel.”

[Romans 9:3](#)

Our test of fellowship is defined by our love for the souls of others!

Those who were not wanted



**Charlie Brown always felt rejected.
He got no Valentines on Valentines' Day**

Disfellowship is needed in some cases

... 'presumptuous sins' (literally, sins with a hand uplifted against Jehovah)... these sins in open contempt of God's word involved the punishment of being 'cut off' from the people of the Lord. Edersheim

Three classes (J. D. Thomas):

We must be so cautious here!

1. Moral: (a man has his father's wife) "hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved..."
1 Corinthians 5:5
2. Personal: "if your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault..., if he will not listen, take one or two others along..., if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church..., if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan..." Matthew 18:15-17
3. Doctrinal: "...watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them." Romans 16:17
see also 2 Thessalonians 3:6, and Galatians 1:6

One reason that disfellowshipping doesn't mean much is that fellowship doesn't mean enough.
Ray Marcrom

Those who were not “authorized”

Then the LORD ... put the Spirit on the seventy elders.... .

However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp... the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp.

A young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."

Joshua son of Nun... spoke up and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!"

But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"

Numbers 11:25-29

"Master," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us."

"Do not stop him," Jesus said, "for whoever is not against you is for you."

Luke 9:49-50

We must not be so quick to judge the authority of others!

We all contribute to the picture of God in the world¹²

All of us joined to Him are an extension of the Incarnation. God reproduces and lives out His image in millions of ordinary people like us...

We are called to bear that image as a Body because any one of us taken individually would present an incomplete image, one partly false and always distorted, like a single glass chip hacked from mirror.

But collectively, in all our diversity, we can come together as a community of believers to restore the image of God in the world.

We are a mosaic of personalities woven together by God's love.

Enlarging the Circle

William Barclay tells the story of French soldiers who brought the body of a dead comrade to a Roman Catholic cemetery.

The priest informed them that he couldn't be buried there unless he had been a Catholic.

So then buried him right outside the fence.

When they came back the next day, they couldn't find the grave.

The priest came out and told them that it had bothered him so much that he had come out and moved the fence to include the soldier.

We must try to expand our fellowship, not limit it!

Should we shoot the wounded or try to heal them?¹³

Sometimes it is very painful to bring differing brethren back together again.

It reminds me of a joint dislocation (of which I have had several); it is painful, and almost excruciating when it is relocated, but the relief once it is back in place is tremendous.

Churches need to be less like national shrines and more like local bars... less like untouchable cathedrals and more like well-used hospitals, places to bleed in rather than monuments to look at...

Charles Swindoll

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Galatians 6:1

Why are bars more popular than churches?

Helping people to come back to the fold

God established cities of refuge

According to the rabbins, in order to aid the fugitive it was the business of the Sanhedrin to keep the roads leading to the cities of refuge in the best possible repair.

No hills were left, every river was bridged, and the road itself was to be at least thirty-two cubits broad.

At every turn were guide posts bearing the word Refuge; and two students of the law were appointed to accompany the fleeing man, to pacify, if possible, the avenger, should he overtake the fugitive.

Every effort was made to assist, not harass, the fugitive.

This applies to those in our number who are wounded

Fellowship means sharing good and bad times

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Jesus: Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?

John 18:11

Paul: ...fill my cup with the sufferings of the church that are left over

Colossians 1.24

Peter: ...participation in the sufferings of Christ.

1 Peter 4.13

We only think of the blessing of 'fellowship'.

True fellowship accepts the suffering with the blessing.

Jesus asked His disciples if they could partake of the cup that He was about to (Matthew 20:22-23).

Galatians 6.17: Paul says, "I bear on my body the marks of Jesus"

Do you have these marks, or scars?

We share the marks in fellowship

Sometimes we give the marks to each other

The cross should totally overshadow our petty differences.

We all need true fellowship

In America, our churches have become like bowl games; fans drive from miles around to watch something in which they take no active part, then leave without making a friend. Bob Summers

As close as marbles in a bag we touch each other... In the touching, as with marbles, our point of contact is so small that geometry knows no formula to compute the minuteness of the touching points. It is a challenge to know yourself. But it is an even greater challenge to know another. Paul R. Beall

On the true vine, the grapes always grow in clusters, that is, in congregations; but, on wild grapes, like the Muscadine, the grapes grow in ones and twos all over it. Therefore Christians must belong to congregations, and not float around like grapes on the wild vine. James Childress

We need to strive to become one with each other.

Convincing others of the truth



We want to hammer our ideas into other people's minds.

We all contribute to the picture of God in the world¹³

All of us joined to Him are an extension of the Incarnation. God reproduces and lives out His image in millions of ordinary people like us...

We are called to bear that image as a Body because any one of us taken individually would present an incomplete image, one partly false and always distorted, like a single glass chip hacked from mirror.

But collectively, in all our diversity, we can come together as a community of believers to restore the image of God in the world.

Brand and Yancey, In His Image

We are a mosaic of personalities woven together by God's love.

God's infinity covers our personalities (1)

12



We are somewhat of a patchwork quilt.

God's infinity covers our personalities (2)

(1 Pet 4:10 NIV) Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

The KJV uses the word “manifold”, with the idea of being “multi-colored”.



Our personalities are knitted together (Colossians 2:2)

God's infinity covers our personalities (3)



Together we are the body of Christ (Romans 12:5).

God's infinity covers our personalities



We are to be the image of God (Colossians 3:10)

True Communion

Bi-racial man suffering from leprosy
disfigured
viewed as contagious

Bitter and mistrustful about those who helped him

Did not contribute, but stole and disrupted

Did not believe any church would accept him

Did not think that people would share the communion

Imagine the moment as he was accepted

The Gift of Pain, by Philip Yancey

He became a productive member of the church and the world.

Could we embrace someone so counter to our normal experience?

Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

Mark 9:24

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

James 1:5

We should be asking for help loving people, too.



Reconciliation



We must strive for reconciliation – with God and each other.

Summary of what we should know

Act justly, love mercy, be humble before God

Micah 6:8

Hate Evil, Love Good...

Amos 5:15

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:36-40

For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

1 Corinthians 2:1-2

... first importance: ... Christ died for our sins

1 Corinthians 15:3-5

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel...

2 Timothy 2:8

... believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another.

1 John 3:23

Faith

Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

Mark 9:24

Knowledge

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

James 1:5

Love

We should be asking for help loving people, too.

God will help us find the way.

Recommended Reading

Hailey, Homer	That You May Believe
Hawley, Monroe	Searching for a Better Way
Hook, Cecil	Free to Speak
	Free in Christ
McGuiggan, Jim	The God of the Towel
Schaeffer; Francis	The Mark of the Christian
	True Spirituality
Shelley, Rubel	I Just Want to be a Christian
Shockley, Norman	Back from the Edge
Short, Robert L.	The Gospel According to Peanuts
	Short Meditations on the Bible and Peanuts
	The Parables of Peanuts
Swindoll, Charles	Dropping Your Guard
Thomas, J.D.	We Be Brethren
Warren, Thomas	Christians Only
Yancey, Philip	The Gift of Pain
	Soul Survivor
	What's so Amazing about Grace?

The greatest danger facing the church is neither *doctrinal* or *moral*.

It is relational.

Hinkle

Grace covers all our shortcomings

GRACE

“With all of our heart”

Obedience

Knowledge

**Grace accounts us though we are righteous,
knowledgeable, and love Him with all of our heart**

But we must not abuse it

The law was added so that the trespass might increase.

But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 5:20-21

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

Romans 6:1-2

Some people think that we lessen grace if we try to be good.

This is absurd!

There is no cheap grace, for Christ shed His blood for it!

A reminder

- **We don't need to have a high IQ to understand what we must do**
 - **The Bible Emphasis is on Principles**
 - **The rules, based on love, give us the best life possible**
 - **We must extend that love to everyone around us**
 - **Emphasis on rules leads off the track (added rules, etc)**
 - **We must not use "truth" to try to gain superiority**
 - **False teachers or selfish desires must not distort our view**
 - **We must love the truth, and write it on our hearts**
 - **We are not trying to minimize it, but to better understand it.**
 - **It is not impossible to live the life God wants us to.**
 - **We are not in a position to judge others.**
- **We are baptized into the death of Christ, and raised into new life.**
 - **We should have confidence in our salvation (due to God's grace)**
 - **Look at the entire list of ideas associated with salvation**

The “Truth” – or Paul’s opinions?

I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. Now to the unmarried and the widows **I** say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

1 Corinthians 7:7-9

To the married I give this command **(not I, but the Lord)** A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

To the rest I say this **(I, not the Lord)** If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him.

1 Corinthians 7:12-13

Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule **I** lay down in all the churches.

1 Corinthians 7:17

How does this affect your view of inspiration?

Paul's opinions?

Now about virgins: **I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment** as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

1 Corinthians 7:25

Because of the present crisis, **I think** that it is good for you to remain as you are. Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife.

1 Corinthians 7:26-27

A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.

In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is--and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 7:39-40

We, like Paul, must be able to separate God's actual commands from our own (perhaps very valuable) opinion

The “Weak” Brother



We should put our efforts into helping people.

The “Weak” Brother -- Romans 14 (Judgment)

Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters
Romans 14:1

Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Romans 14:4

You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

Romans 14:10-13

Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.

Romans 14:16

Our judgment can be very harmful to others.

The “Weak” Brother -- Romans 14 (Food)

One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him.

Romans 14:2-3

He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

Romans 14:6

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.

Romans 14:17-18

The kingdom of God is not about physical things.

The “Weak” Brother -- Romans 14 (Special Days and Being Convinced)

One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord.

Romans 14:5

So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Romans 14:22-23

We must think things through and be convinced for our own selves, but not forced on others.

The “Weak” Brother -- Romans 14 (Part of the Body)

For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

Romans 14:7-9

The “strong” can’t abandon the “weak”.

The “Weak” Brother -- Romans 14 (Build Up and not Destroy)

As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.

Romans 14:14-15

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Romans 14:19

Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.

Romans 14:20-21

Does our attitude help build or destroy?

The “Weak” Brother -- Romans 15 (Strengthen and Accept)

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."

Romans 15:1-3

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:5-7

Be Christ-like in our treatment of the “weak”.

Similar Argument from 1 Corinthians about Food¹⁴

But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.

Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.

For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols?

So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge.

When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

1 Corinthians 8:7-12

When we hurt others, we sin against Christ.

Who is really the “weak” brother?

We may be the weak one, and the one we considered weak maybe the strong one!



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We are all sinners and depend on the grace of God.

Restatement: Help the Weak



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In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Acts 20:35

And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Helping the weak is the essence of God's love.

To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

1 Corinthians 9:22

Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

1 Corinthians 11:29

Will we “lower” ourselves to help those who are weak?

**Christ lowered himself to come to earth
in the form of a man to save us.**