

Christian Ethics, Part 1: Love, Sex, and Marriage

Scripture: Hebrews 13:1–4

Code: 1639

INTRODUCTION

Hebrews 13 deals with the subject of Christian ethics. In it we discover the type of behavior that God expects from believers. We will be examining some practical guidelines for the life of a Christian.

A. The Purposes of Christian Ethics

1. Shutting the Mouths of the Critics

a. Peter Peter said, "For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet. 2:15). Peter said that you need to live so that no one can cast any doubt on Christianity by the kind of life that you're living. b. Pliny the Younger Pliny was the Roman governor of Bithinia [a region in N. Asia Minor] during the early second century. He examined Christians to find a charge on which to condemn them. However, he was forced to admit this to Trajan, the Roman emperor: "They bind themselves by oath, not for any criminal purpose, but to abstain from theft, robbery, and adultery, to commit no breach of trust and not to deny a deposit when called upon to restore it" [The Letters of the Younger Pliny [N. Y. : Penguin Books, 1981], p. 294). He was surprised to report that Christians were characterized by moral and financial integrity. c. Paul In many cases in the early church, the Christians were such a rebuke to the world, that that the world often sought something to blame them for. But they were usually unable to find anything, after closely examining their conduct. Excellent behavior was in Paul's mind when he instructed Titus, "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity [dignity], sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Tit. 2:7-8). In other words, live in such a way that you won't be deserving of any criticism.

2. Winning People to Christ

In Titus 3:14, Paul said, "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." The meaning of fruit in the New Testament includes winning people to Christ. If we are to be fruitful, we are to maintain an exemplary life of good works. That will result in the salvation of others.

3. Glorifying God

In Hebrews 13, we find that it is important for us to do good works because God is glorified. Verse 21 speaks of God making us "perfect in every good work to do His will, working in [us] that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen." The glory of God is another reason that the believer is to live a pure life. We are to so live that when the world slanders us, they can only criticize us for doing good. If we are to be criticized for something, let us be criticized for doing good, not evil (1 Pet. 3:16).

B. The Practice of Christian Ethics

Since we are to live a pure life--characterized by doing that which is good--then we ought to know what we should and shouldn't do. Hebrews 13 gives some practical ethics that result in a Christian life that is without rebuke when they are exercised. What are these standards for living? What are the principles that will make our lives positive testimonies? How are we to act in the face of a

Christless world as we attempt to bring it to Christ? How do I bring glory to God? The answers to those questions are found in this chapter.

We have a great responsibility to live to the glory of God and shut the mouths of the critics. If anyone is going to criticize Christianity, let him do so unjustly. Alexander MacLaren, a famous nineteenth century English preacher, said, "The world takes its notion of God, most of all, from the people who say they belong to God's family. They read us a great deal more than they read the Bible. They see us; they only hear about Jesus Christ." How do you usually learn about a mother and father? By observing their children. Similarly, people make their evaluations about God on the basis of you and me.

Jesus presented that reality in the Sermon on the Mount. He said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16). A good son brings honor to his father. That's true in the spiritual realm also. We should live in such a way that men not only don't criticize us, but rather glorify God because of our lives. Our lives must be a true reflection of our integrity--not an artificial facade of goodness, like that which D. L. Moody exposed at a conference he was attending. Some zealous young people who took their Christian life very seriously decided to have an all-night prayer meeting. As they were leaving in the morning, they met Mr. Moody and informed him that they had been praying all night. One of them said, "Mr. Moody, see how our faces shine!" Moody simply responded, "Moses knew not that his face shone." The goodness that is self-conscious is hypocritical. In contrast, our goodness should result in the glory of God, not the glory of ourselves.

I have outlined Hebrews 13 into three sections: the ethics, the example, and the energy. What are the ethics? Who are our examples? What kind of energy is necessary to carry out the ethics? Let's begin by looking at. . .

I. THE ETHICS (vv. 1-19)

The term ethics refers to a standard of conduct or moral judgment. There are secular classes that teach about ethics. They often follow Professor Joseph Fletcher's situation ethics: Whatever accommodates the situation determines the ethic one applies. Such a philosophy results in the elimination of absolutes. However, Christians believe that there are absolutes.

The ethics of Hebrews 13 are divided into three categories: those in relation to others, those in relation to ourselves, and those in relation to God. Let's begin with ethics. . .

A. In Relation to Others (vv. 1-3)

The author of Hebrews is presupposing that we already are Christians. On that basis, he states what is required of us. The first required ethic is. . .

1. Sustained Love (vv. 1-2)

a. For Brothers (v. 1)"Let brotherly love continue." 1) Its ExplanationThe supreme ethic for the Christian is loving his brother. Brotherly love is one word in the Greek: philadelphia. It comes from two words: phile^o, which means "to have a great affection for," and adelphos, which means "brother", or "from the same womb," in a more literal sense. Therefore, the compound meaning is "to have a great affection for those who came from the same womb." There are two groups that this ethic could apply to:a) Loving Jewish BrothersThroughout the book of Hebrews, the writer has been telling his readers to separate themselves from Judaism and make a commitment to the New Covenant, which alone is sufficient for salvation. Jewish Christians were being persecuted by Jewish people who had remained in Judaism. In order to prevent any retaliation, the writer exhorts his readers to let brotherly love continue toward their Jewish brethren. Furthermore, the term brethren is often used in the New Testament to speak of Jewish people with regard to their common ancestry: They were all descendants of Abraham. The Apostle Paul is a good example of someone who continued to love his Jewish brethren. Although he had separated himself from Judaism, he was still able to say that his "heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Rom.

10:1; cf. 9:1-3). He had a deep, passionate love for Israel. It behooves us also to love Jewish people who have not yet recognized their Messiah. I think there is a greater significance to verse 1. Its most obvious application is in the act of. . . b) Loving Christian Brothers Although our brothers in Christ are not from the same womb physically, they are spiritually, having been born again by the Spirit into one body. We are all brothers of Christ. Hebrews 2:11 says that Jesus "is not ashamed to call [those He has saved] brethren." Romans 8:17 says that we are "joint heirs with Christ. . . ." Furthermore, we have been adopted as sons of God with all the accompanying rights of sonship (Ephesians 1). Many other statements as well indicate that we are brothers in Christ. We are part of the same family. 2) Its Extension Notice that the verbal imperative in verse 1 is "continue". The verse doesn't say, "Get brotherly love started." It implies that it was already being practiced. When somebody is saved, they usually have a desire to be with other believers. Ironically, it's only a matter of time until they discover that some believers can be cantankerous. New Christians gradually learn to pick and choose, and that results in division. However, baby Christians enjoy the fellowship without reservations. First Peter 1:22 says, "Seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." One of the by-products of obeying the truth is having a sincere love for other Christians. Peter is saying, "Since you have brotherly love, exercise it." That type of exhortation is typical in New Testament: It identifies our resources and encourages us to use them. You don't have to go scrounging around as if you were on a spiritual treasure hunt to find the goodies that God has stashed! In fact, Peter says that God has "given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. . ." (2 Pet. 1:3). Therefore, godly living is not really a question of getting anything more; it's a question of using what you have. So, the author of Hebrews exhorts his readers, who already love one another, to let that love continue. 3) Its Example The Hebrew readers had already shown their brotherly love, as cited by the epistle's author in 6:10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shown toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." 4) Its Essence When I am preoccupied with myself, I cannot continue in brotherly love. Paul told the Philippians to have "the same love" (2:2). How is that done? Paul says, ". . . let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; And, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:3-8). That's humility, the essence of love. Brotherly love is spawned out of humility. The latter grows out of right spiritual knowledge that is the product of evaluating your life by the divine standard. As long as you measure yourself by someone else's standard, you will look fairly good if you pick a person who has lower standards than you. But when you measure yourself by the standards of the Word of God and the person of Christ--and pattern your life after them--you will be humble. Only when you are humble, can you effectively love your brothers in Christ. 5) Its Effect Brotherly love is important for three reasons: a) It Reveals a Christian's Identity to the World John 13:34-35 says, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another." God gave the world the right to evaluate the lives of Christians on the basis of our love. Therefore, it's important that we consider others better than ourselves, humbly seeking to meet the needs of others, regardless of how much we must sacrifice. If we don't, the world will not fully understand the One to whom we belong. b) It Reveals a Christian's Identity to Himself First John 3:14 says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren*. . ." Do you know how you can tell if you are saved? You will have that assurance if you love other Christians, seeking to fellowship with them and minister to them. c) It Delights God Psalm 133:1 says "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in

unity!" That is pleasing to God. If you want to give glory to God, live in brotherly love. 6) Its Evidence

Brotherly love is not a sweet sentimentalism. It is a sincere love that produces commitment. First John 3:16-17 says, "By this perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whosoever hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" If you see a need and have the necessary resources, yet refuse to supply them, John says that there is no evidence that God's love is an expression of your life. Verses 18-19 say, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. " If you have trouble doubting your salvation, check your love for your brothers. 7) Its Enemies

a) Identified Tragically, we have to admit that brotherly love isn't what it ought to be in the church. The numerous expressions of sin have an adverse effect on love. (1) Matthew 24:12--Jesus knew that love would inevitably diminish. He said, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold. " Iniquity makes love grow cold. (2) James 4:1-6, 10-11, 16--James identified selfish pride as an enemy of love: "From where come wars and fightings among you? Come they not here, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble*. . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up. Speak not evil one of another, brethren*. . . But now ye rejoice in your boastings; all such rejoicing is evil. " James is saying that selfish pride brings division and iniquity shatters love. (3) Titus 3:2-4, 6, 8--Paul exhorted Christians "to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after the kindness and love of God, our Savior. . . which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior. . . . This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. " When Christians are divisive and critical, brotherly love cannot exist. As a result, the testimony of the church is ruined, the assurance of salvation lessened, and God is not glorified. Love only grows in the garden of humility. b) Illustrated

Proverbs 30:15 says, "The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give*. . . " The leech is a large repulsive insect that has two forks in its tongue. It penetrates the skin of a horse and gorges itself on the blood of its victim until it explodes. Spiritually speaking, the leech represents self-love, and the two daughters are self-righteousness and self-pity. As the leech is never satisfied, so self-love is never satisfied. There are many people who claim to be Christians, but they only take from others so that they may satisfy themselves. Self-love perverts true love, which was exemplified by Jesus--He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (Mk. 10:45). Self must die if brotherly love is to continue. Pride holds grudges. From a human standpoint Jesus had a lot to be proud of, He said, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart. . . " (Mt. 11:29). In contrast to the example of Jesus, the disciples argued about who among them would be the greatest in the Kingdom (Mk. 10:35-45). But Jesus was willing to stoop down and wash their feet (Jn. 13:5). He then instructed them to follow His pattern of servanthood. Don't exalt yourself, for self-love and pride destroy love. b. For Strangers (v. 2)"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. "1) The Responsibility (v. 2a)The term "strangers" could refer to believers or unbelievers. The Bible says that we are to show love to strangers, even those who are unbelievers. a) Galatians 6:10--". . . let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. "b) 1 Thessalonians

5:15--"See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. "c) Matthew 5:43-44, 46-47--"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you. . . . For if ye love them who love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the tax collectors the same? And if ye greet your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the heathen so?" We are called to love those who are outside Christianity. You say, "I tried that and I got taken!" Join the club! If a man approaches you and says, "I'm broke. I need ten dollars to feed my starving family," what are you going to do? Assuming that he's not drunk and would just go out and spend the money on alcohol, give it to him. Use good judgment. If you are faced with a dilemma, make a decision to love the man and let him worry about the consequences of what he does with the money. God will honor you for loving a stranger. Everyone who is willing to love the unlovable eventually gets taken advantage of. But love is like that--it makes you vulnerable. But that doesn't mean that you stop loving. Don't get sour on love just because people have taken advantage of your generosity.

The Jewish Perspective Toward Strangers

The Jewish people honored hospitality. They had a saying that stated there were six things a man would be rewarded for in this world and the world to come. Two of those things were hospitality to strangers and visiting the sick. In fact, Abraham was regarded as outstanding for his hospitality. Therefore, it was assumed that a true son of Abraham must love strangers. Certainly Christians shouldn't do anything less than that.

d) 1 Timothy 3:2--"A bishop then must be. . . given to hospitality. . . " (cf. Tit. 1:8). A pastor or leader in a church should have an open home where people can take part in his life, and have their needs met. e) 1 Timothy 5:10--Paul instructed that a widow who was to be supported by the church should have a reputation of "good works, if she hath brought up children, if she hath lodged strangers, if she hath washed the saints' feet, if she hath relieved the afflicted. . . . "2) The Reason (v. 2b)". . . for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. "a) The Allusion IdentifiedThe author of Hebrews is not saying that we should be hospitable because we might get lucky and entertain angels. He's merely stating the fact that some have. He is referring to Genesis 18, where the Lord and two angels came to visit Abraham, who responded with appropriate hospitality. A similar situation occurred with Gideon and Manoah in Judges 6 and 13 respectively. b) The Attitude IdentifiedWhenever I feel a tendency to ignore those in need, it is necessary for me remember Matthew 25:43-45. The Son of Man will tell those He is judging, "I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. " How you show your love to a stranger reflects your attitude toward Jesus Christ. Sustained love is basic to the Christian ethic of loving brothers and strangers, whether they are believers or unbelievers. The second ethic that is mentioned in this chapter is. . .

2. Sympathy (v. 3)

"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them who suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. "a. The ExhortationWhen you can empathize with those who are in prison, you are exercising true compassion. The Christians in the early church had trouble staying out of jail because they were often persecuted for their faith. One of the most ungodly characteristics of all is selfish callousness. Saying "I've got enough troubles of my own without getting involved in anybody else's" is the antithesis of the Christian ethic. We're to have sympathy for people in need. If that is a typical response of yours, then you ought replace your self-pity with self-sacrifice for

others. The best way to get rid of your own problems is by working to eliminate other people's problems. In doing so, you'll lose yourself in their needs. People who are preoccupied with their own problems cannot be sympathetic towards others. b. The Example We need to bear each other's burdens, feeling what they feel (Gal. 6:2). Christ did. Hebrews 4:15 tells us, "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. " He knows every trial we've ever faced and felt every pain we've ever felt. Therefore, we should follow His example and sympathetically loose ourselves in the care of others. Christian ethics begin with expressing love and sympathy to others, whether they are brothers or strangers. Let's now see how they apply. . .

B. In Relation to Ourselves (vv. 4-9)

1. Sexual Purity (v. 4)

This ethic appropriately follows the discussion of love, because when love is perverted, it becomes lust. Verse 4 says, "Marriage is honorable. That's a true statement; God looks at marriage as an honorable institution because He designed it. However, marriage is not honorable in the world today; people ridicule it and question its validity. Much of society views marriage as an institution for the older generation only. But in God's eyes. . . (1) Marriage Is Honorable The writer of Hebrews could have been responding to the viewpoint of some ascetics who had taken a vow of chastity. Some of them, like Origen, the third century church father, even had themselves castrated in an effort to bring about greater devotion to God. In verse 4, the Holy Spirit nullifies that ridiculous practice. Such an extreme measure is not pleasing to God. Since He designed marriage, He expects it to be honorable. There's nothing wrong with it at all, in spite of the fact that some teachers in the last days will forbid people to marry (1 Tim. 4:3). (2) Marital Sex Is Undeiled By saying that the bed is "undeiled," the writer of Hebrews means that the sexual relationship between a husband and his wife is pure. That's a liberating truth. You don't need to feel guilty, because whatever you do in the intimacy of your marriage is undeiled in the sight of God. (That assumes that the expression of your sexual relationship is within the bounds of decency, health, and mutual agreement.) When you were married to the one you love, you became responsible for fulfilling your partner's sexual needs. b) An Exhortation on Marriage I think it is better not to use the word is in the first phrase of verse 4 so that it would be translated as a request rather than a statement: "Let marriage be honorable in all, and the bed undeiled. " The verse can be translated either way, but since the context of the chapter has been one of exhortation (vv. 1, 5, 13), I also believe that it is best to see verse 4 as a request. The author is calling for his readers to maintain sexual purity, which is characteristic of a godly marriage. Although God designed marriage as an honorable institution, it is not very honorable in California, where there is about one divorce for every marriage. Jesus confirmed God's exalted view of marriage by attending one and performing His first miracle there. The Holy Spirit honored marriage by making it a picture of the church in Ephesians 5:23-32. The entire Trinity has testified that marriage is honorable. But rather than stating that fact, I believe verse 4 is exhorting us make our marriages honorable in the sense of their purity. Sex outside the marriage union is defiling.

Why did God establish marriage?

Scripture indicates at least four reasons for marriage:

1. Producing Children

In Genesis 1:28, God commanded Adam and Eve to "be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth. . . . "

2. Preventing Immorality

There are some people who couldn't stay morally pure as singles. First Corinthians 7:2 says, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. "

3. Eliminating Loneliness

God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. . . ." (Gen. 2:18).

4. Enjoying Intimacy

Added to these theological reasons is the fact that marriage is an enjoyable and fulfilling relationship. It was meant to be an expression of the fullness of love (Prov. 5:15-19).

Scripture clearly portrays marriage as a very honorable relationship.

2) Applied You say, "How can I be sure that I really have a marriage that honors God?" There are three principles that should characterize every marriage: a) Its Head Should Be the Husband God is glorified in a family where the husband is the head. The Bible says, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. . . ." (Eph. 5:23; cf. 1 Cor. 11:3). b) The Wife Should Be in Subjection A loving submission should characterize every wife, as indicated in 1 Peter 3:5-6: "For after this manner [of loving subjection] in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands, even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. . . ." c) Its Love Should Be Characterized by Giving When a marriage is properly regulated by love, both partners give of themselves, rather than take for themselves. Your attitude ought to be, "How can I fulfill the one I love? What can I do to please him or her?" In the physical, financial, emotional, and spiritual areas in your marriage, you should not focus on what you can get, but what you can give (Eph. 5:25; 1 Pet. 3:7).

b. The Punishment (v. 4b) 1) Assured Since marriage is honorable and sexual expression within it is undefiled, we are exhorted to keep it that way. We are never to have any kind of sexual activity outside the purity of the marriage relationship, because "fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (v. 4). That is the only time that a statement of judgment goes along with an ethic in Hebrews 13. God is serious about sexual purity. If a person is involved in an illicit sexual relationship, he may be able to escape the notice of man, but he'll never escape the judgment of God. Whether it be the chastisement of believers or the damnation of unbelievers, judgment comes. Ephesians 5:6 says, "Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience. "God judges unbelievers who abuse sex. They might think they are living it up in this world, but their deceitful pleasure is only temporary. Our society is preoccupied with sex. The media constantly tries to sell merchandise through the avenue of sex. Today, sexual indulgence is blatantly practiced and accepted as normal. We hear people advocating the current emphasis on sex by saying things like, "Don't deprive me of sex; it's innocent pleasure. I must have sex before marriage. How else will I distinguish whether my relationship is based on lust or love?" Eternity magazine quoted Hugh Hefner as saying, "Sex is a function of the body, a drive man shares with animals, like eating, drinking, and sleeping. It is a physical demand that must be satisfied. If you don't satisfy it, you will have all sorts of neuroses and repression psychoses. Sex is here to stay. Let's forget the prudery that makes us hide from it--throw away those inhibitions; find a girl who's like-minded, and let yourself go. " That's his philosophy. It looks like he's getting away with it, but he's not--he'll never escape the judgment of God. The abuse of sex will not only bring ultimate judgment; it will also bring temporal consequences, such as the collapse of marriages, venereal diseases, family breakups, murder, and suicide. You can't live against the grain of true morality and think you can beat the consequences.

2) Avoided You say, "How do I govern my activity so that I don't experience God's judgment?" First Thessalonians 4:3-8 provides some standards for sexual conduct. Paul commands that Christians should. . . a) Stay Away from Sexual Sin Verse 3 says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication. " "Adultery" specifically refers to sexual immorality with someone other than your spouse. "Fornication," however, refers to any kind of immoral sexual activity, whether it's homosexuality, bestiality, or sex before marriage, and includes the more specific category of adultery. You should stay far away from fornication to be pure. That is explicitly the will of God. b) Control Your Body Paul also told the Thessalonians, ". . . every one of you should know how to possess his vessel [or, body] in sanctification and honor" (v. 4) You should

know how to control your body so that it honors God. Is your body under control? Some young people go out on a date and lose control. Their bodies are actually controlling them. Paul said, "All things are lawful unto me. . . but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Cor. 6:12). Rather than being controlled by your body, you ought to keep control so that it honors God. Paul recognized that maintaining control is not easy for he said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27). There are many men in the ministry who didn't control their physical desires and have thus rendered themselves as castaways. c) Don't Be Guided by Lust Verse 5 says, "Not in the lust of sensuality, even as the Gentiles who know not God. " Christians should not be living like the rest of the world, which is guided by lust. Whatever the world is selling, most people are buying. If the world throws open the floodgates of sex, people will go as far as society will let them go without being arrested. Such unrestraint is evidence of man's depravity. d) Don't Take Advantage of Others In verse 6, Paul warned "that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter. . . . " Some people use others to satisfy their desires. Scripture forbids us from using other people to selfishly gain an advantage. These are important principles that we must apply if we desire to honor God.

Focusing on the Facts

1. What are three purposes of Christian ethics?
2. What does a situational ethic result in? How does Christian philosophy differ?
3. What is the supreme ethic for the Christian?
4. What two groups can brotherly love be applied to?
5. According to 1 Peter 1:22, what is one of the by-products of obeying the truth?
6. What attitude is brotherly love spawned out of? What standard should we use to measure ourselves? Why?
7. What three important effects does brotherly love have?
8. What is the evidence that the love of God dwells within a believer? (1 Jn. 3:16-19)
9. What hinders the expression of brotherly love?
10. How does the leech represent self-love?
11. Who are Christians commanded to show hospitality to?
12. What can happen to somebody who is willing to love the unloved? Should that discourage the Christian's efforts in this area? Explain.
13. What is the relationship between how you treat a stranger and your attitude toward Jesus Christ? Cite Scripture to support your answer.
14. What type of people find it difficult to be sympathetic to others?
15. Against whom is sexual impurity a sin, according to 1 Corinthians 6:18?
16. Why does God look upon marriage as an honorable institution, despite what society may think? How do Jesus and the Holy Spirit each confirm the Father's exalted view of marriage?
17. What are three reasons that God established marriage? Cite Scripture to support your answer.
18. What are three basic principles that characterize every God-honoring marriage? Cite Scripture to support your answer.
19. Give some examples of the consequences of abusing sex.
20. What principles does 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 give with regard to maintaining sexually pure conduct?

Pondering the Principles

1. Reread the quote of Alexander MacLaren's on page x. What is your life currently telling others about the Lord you profess to serve? Do your relatives, neighbors, and co-workers see in you a reflection of a God who is gracious and merciful? In the context of Matthew 5:16, identify the good

works you are doing that are a product of your salvation. Make sure that there is evidence of Christ in your life, so that when you speak to others about Christ, you will be a credible witness.

2. Brotherly love is fostered by humility and hindered by selfishness. Are you aware of any expression of selfishness in your life? Do you usually make decisions on the basis of how the outcome will benefit you first, and others next? Read Philippians 2. What three examples does Paul give of humility in action? Prayerfully seek how you might be more sensitive to meeting the needs of others.

3. How would you rate your hospitality? It is relatively easy to be hospitable to those you like and have things in common with. But do you have the courage to open your house to someone who needs food, shelter, or a shower? Is your fear of being inconvenienced or taken advantage of greater than your willingness to meet a need? If you are married, prayerfully discuss with your spouse how you could respond to a need that you became aware of. Could you offer a meal, a shower, a temporary room, some clothes--or the gospel? Don't let the risks prevent you from ministering to others!

4. The most intimate and fulfilling relationship of all can be that between a husband and a wife. Because a godly family is the fundamental building block of society, Satan seeks its destruction. Is it any wonder that we can so easily be lured away from the relationship that ought to be the most indestructible? Have you been tempted to nurture a romantic relationship outside of your marriage? If that temptation occurred, how did you respond to it? Did you seek to justify it, or did you recognize its sinfulness in God's eyes? How do the following verses advise us to lead a sexually pure life: Job 31:1-4; Proverbs 6:23-35; 2 Timothy 2:19-22?

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