

LESSON 6

ETHICAL TEACHINGS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS

PART I: THE ETHICS OF THE PAULINE EPISTLES

Introduction

Some scholars have criticized the writings of Paul, saying that he took the simple teachings of Jesus and transformed them into theological declarations that are too sophisticated and complicated. For this reason, they conclude that Paul contributed to the confusion of the Christian religion and not to its clarification. Those who have this opinion of Paul judge him unjustly. He was the great interpreter of Jesus, and he had a more profound religious experience than most people in the day of Jesus. His vision on the road to Damascus has always held a prominent place in descriptions of religious experiences.

We must understand the teachings of Paul from the background of his unique experiences in childhood and the special preparation he had as a Jew in Tarsus. He enjoyed many advantages in his intellectual, moral, and spiritual preparation. He himself stated that he had studied under the most prominent teachers of his day. He was well acquainted with Greek philosophy, Judaism, and the mystery religions.¹ Marshall states that Paul introduced the leaven of the ethical teachings of Jesus into European society and, thus, helped to lay the foundations of what we commonly call 'western civilization'.² He continues by saying that Christianity has been the strongest moral influence the world has known, and this fact is due in part to the influence of Paul.

The Basis of His Message

A difference exists between the terminology of Jesus and Paul. The central theme of Jesus was the Kingdom of God, while Paul referred to it only twelve times. However, underneath the surface, the difference is not as great because they both referred to the same idea in different terms. Paul's favourite term was to be 'in Christ', which carries the same idea as Jesus' references to entering into the Kingdom. Paul's terminology reveals a strong theological basis. He freely used such terms as justification, reconciliation, salvation, redemption, adoption, and sanctification. He emphasized in all these terms that man must come face to face with God, recognize that he is a sinner, and accept Christ as his Saviour, who alone can give to him the correct relationship with God.

Paul directed his message and his main efforts to the Gentiles; whereas Jesus directed His ministry and teachings primarily to the Jews. Since the Jews were already familiar with many of the religious and moral teachings of the Old Testament, Jesus could build upon that foundation. But Paul

¹For a full discussion of this topic see: Archibald B. D. Alexander, *The Ethics of St. Paul* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1910), pp. 28-54.

²L.H. Marshall, *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 216.

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

Some accuse Paul of transforming Jesus' simple teachings into complicated t_____ declarations.

(theological)

Marshall says the fact that Christianity is the strongest moral influence in the world due in part to _____ influence.

(Paul's)

MATCH TERMINOLOGY.

Jesus	1. Kingdom of God
Paul	2. in Christ

(Jesus—1, Paul—2)

MATCH MINISTRIES.

Jesus	1. ministered to Gentiles
Paul	2. ministered to Jews

(Jesus—1, Paul—2)

had to present a more elementary message of man's relationship to God since most of the Gentile world was not familiar with the background experiences of the Jews.

Paul summarized the dynamic religious experience in the phrase 'in Christ'. He interpreted salvation and the Christian life as being 'in Christ' and living 'in Christ' (Rom. 16:3, 9; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20; Col. 4:7; Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 3:8). Paul states that without Christ one is without hope (Rom. 10:8-10). He recognized that the basic need of man is salvation. This need was met completely when Christ died on the cross for man's sins.

Emphasizing the importance of this idea, Martin says:

The key to all that the Apostle taught is to be found in his favourite expression, 'in Christ'. He had learnt that by faith in Christ the moral consciousness is brought under the power of a personal example. The life 'in Christ' was to St. Paul, a life controlled by Christ. . . .

Thus in St. Paul's teaching Christ is the great inspiring force which moulds the human character.³

Thus, the basis of the ethical message of Paul is the religious experience of coming into a right relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Nature of Paul's Ethics

Non-systematic

Paul probably had a good understanding of the moral philosophy of the various systems of his day. He likely studied *stoicism* (the philosophical view that wise men should be free from passion, unmoved by joy or grief, and submissive to natural law), *epicureanism* (the teachings of Epicurus who taught that pleasure and happiness are the natural ends of life, but held intellectual pleasures to be superior to others), and *hedonism*. Although he did not treat these philosophies systematically, his writings indicate that he considered them to be in conflict with the Christian way of life. He emphasized that the individual must find the way to be acceptable before God as a result of his transformation through Christ. He did not try to introduce a systematized ethic to compete with these systems. His approach was problem-centred: he gave counsel to the small groups of Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire. He tried to correct the erroneous concepts of those teaching false doctrines and offered encouragement and help to those having difficulty understanding and applying the Christian message.

Paul's teachings are characterized by specific instructions in response to questions and problems. He did not offer many general principles. At times he spoke with a great deal of feeling and gave radical solutions to problems which were corrupting the Christian community. Marshall states that Paul did not let his readers draw their own conclusions; he himself made them explicit.⁴

Eschatological in nature

Paul's eschatological viewpoint greatly influenced his ethical and social teachings. He did not see far into the future and

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

Paul interpreted salvation and the Christian life as _____ 'in Christ' and _____ 'in Christ'.

(being, living)

The r_____ e_____ of coming into the right relationship with J_____ C_____ is the basis of Paul's ethical teaching.

(religious experience, Jesus Christ)

S_____ is the viewpoint which says wise men should be free from passion and submissive to n_____. I_____. E_____ taught that p_____ and h_____ are the natural ends of life.

(Stoicism, natural law, Epicureanism, pleasure, happiness)

Paul did not introduce a s_____ ethic. His approach was p_____ -c_____.

(systematic, problem-centred)

FINISH READING THIS PARAGRAPH ON THE NEXT PAGE AND DO THE EXERCISE THERE.

³William Martin, *St. Paul's Ethical Teaching* (London: Arthur L. Humphreys, 1917), pp. 34, 35.

⁴Marshall, *New Testament Ethics*, p. 220.

thought that the end of time was near. He expected the second coming of Jesus and a catastrophic end to history to occur during his lifetime. For this reason, some of his teachings were quite extreme. For instance, he told the Corinthians that it is better not to marry (1 Cor. 7:1ff.). To marry would involve taking time for one's wife and children and thus detract from the time that one would have to serve the Lord. Paul thought that, since the Lord would be returning soon, it would be better to dedicate oneself completely to His work. When Paul realized later that Jesus' second coming would be delayed, he tempered his teachings.

The ascetic element

Many have seen the basis for declaring Paul's teachings ascetic in nature in his statements about marriage and the expression of the sexual impulse. But Paul did not require anyone to be celibate. 'If thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned' (1 Cor. 7:28). Paul did not reject one's right to own material possessions, but he did recognize that it was more important to be rich towards God (2 Cor. 6:10). Paul was not ascetic in matters relating to eating and special foods. He told the Romans and the Corinthians to eat whatever was placed before them without asking if the meat was from an animal that had been sacrificed in a pagan ceremony (1 Cor. 10:27). He also challenged the Christians to be forces for changing the world instead of submitting to the influences from the world (Rom. 12:1-2). These passages illustrate that Paul's teachings helped the Christians to recognize that their role was to influence society positively and not separate themselves in an ascetic manner.

Non-legalistic

Paul had a great deal to say about the Law. Upon reading Galatians and Romans, one gets a negative impression of the place of the Law because these letters contain verses implying that it served only to condemn man. Paul pointed out that no one had lived up to all the requirements of the Law; therefore, no man could be justified by the Law.

Paul recognized, however, that there was value in the Law. It had served to give man an ideal for his behaviour. He referred to the Law as the schoolmaster that brings us to Christ (Gal. 3:24). The schoolmaster in the days of Paul was the servant responsible for accompanying the children to the teacher and the one who went to pick them up after the classes ended. Thus Paul meant that the Law had served to bring the person to the threshold of Christianity. It also helped man to see that within his own strength there was not the capacity to completely obey the Law's demands. Upon realizing the futility of this attempt, man could only cry out with Paul, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (Rom. 7:24). When trying to fulfil the Law, man must respond that he is incapable of doing so and must cast himself upon God's mercy.

Paul taught that the Christian is no longer under the Law but related to Christ in such a way that the Holy Spirit intercedes for him. 'But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter' (Rom. 7:6). In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul said that the old life passes away when one comes to know Christ and that one begins a new life

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

Paul's ethical and social teachings were influenced by his e_____v_____. He thought the e_____ of t_____ and J_____s_____c_____ were near. Therefore, his teaching were sometimes quite e_____. He tempered his teachings when he realized the second coming would be d_____.

(eschatological viewpoint, end, time, Jesus' second coming, extreme, delayed)

Paul was not ascetic in his teachings about m_____, material p_____, or matters relating to f_____. Rather, he challenged Christians to be forces for c_____ the w_____ and not to s_____ to its influences.

(marriage, possessions, food, changing, world, submit)

Some of Paul's epistles seem to indicate a negative impression of the _____.

(Law)

LIST THREE WAYS PAUL CONSIDERED THE LAW VALUABLE.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(1. It gives an ideal for behaviour; 2. It helps to bring man to Christ; 3. It helps man to see he cannot obey in his own strength)

in Him. He gave a categorical judgement of his attitude towards the Law in 2 Corinthians 3:6, 'For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life'. Paul was saying that there are not enough external controls to dominate a man and thus the controls must come from within if they are to be effective. The Law works from without, trying to make its way into the inner life of man, but Christ transforms from within, and the outward behaviour is affected.

Paul pictured the Christian life as free from condemnation and enslavement to self and sin. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 8:1). Living the Christian life was to experience this freedom in all its fullness. Ultimately Paul discovered that he was willing to give more in service to Christ as a result of this freedom than he had as a follower of the Law. Love always elicits a great deal more than duty in relationships.

The Relationship of Religion and Ethics

Paul's point of view was that the moral and social evils of his day were due to the lack of a vital relationship with God. In Romans 1, Paul painted a dark picture of degradation in man who follows his natural instincts without any positive influence from God, society, or self. These conditions may not have been universal, but they were quite common in the culture of the day. He said that when the Gentile world rejected God, He gave it up to a reprobate mind (Rom. 1:28). Thus the world of Paul's day was not acquainted with a religious experience which had uplifting effects on the moral life of its adherents.

Paul's writings give proof of the importance of ethical standards and moral living as results of religious experience. In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul dedicated eleven chapters to the major theological ideas and then came to the practical application in the last five chapters of the book. In these first chapters, he presented man's need for redemption, God's provision for this need, and the way to become a Christian and thereby experience freedom in Christ. In Romans 12 through 15, he dealt with ethical standards and moral living, including duties towards oneself, family members, and society as a whole.

In Corinthians, Paul dealt with specific problems which the church in Corinth faced. Most of these problems were related to practical daily relationships. He spoke of the divisions in the church as a result of preferences for different leaders. He wrote about immorality in the church membership. One member was involved in an illicit sexual relationship with another member. He emphasized the importance of diverse spiritual gifts and relegated the gift of tongues to a place of relative unimportance. The spiritual pride of those who claimed the gift had added to the strife and division within the church. He also spoke of the role of women in the church and their manner of dress and participation. This book has much to say about ethical and moral issues.

The Epistle to the Ephesians also has theological and ethical sections. Paul gave some very profound theological concepts in the first chapters, including God's foreknowledge and predestination of man, His provision for man's redemption through Christ's death, and the dynamic for living the Christian life. Then Paul came in the practical section to discuss

NOW THAT YOU HAVE FINISHED READING THE NATURE OF PAUL'S ETHICS, LIST THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

What did Paul believe was the cause of the moral and social evils of his day?

(Lack of a vital relationship with God)

LIST SOME OF THE ETHICAL AND MORAL ISSUES WITH WHICH PAUL DEALT IN HIS CORINTHIAN EPISTLES.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

FINISH READING THIS PARAGRAPH ON THE NEXT PAGE AND DO THE EXERCISE THERE.

responsibilities between husbands and wives and parents and children and relationships between masters and slaves. He challenged the Christian to live as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Colossians and 1 Timothy are similar in their organization. All these writings point up the importance that Paul saw in relating religious experience to ethical and moral conduct.

Motivation for Ethical Conduct

Outward behaviour is important; inward motivation is also important. One may do good with impure motives, but the inner satisfaction will be incomplete if the motivation is not correct. For this reason, good behaviour should spring from correct motivation. Paul's writings show many motives for serving God.

The motive of fear

Paul appealed to fear and the need to escape from the wrath of God as a basis for good conduct. In Ephesians 5:5-7, he spoke of the fornicators, idolaters, and covetous people as those who will not inherit the Kingdom. 'For because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience' (5:6b).

Paul's purpose was to show that, if one desires to escape the wrath of God, he should be careful to avoid that kind of behaviour. In Colossians, he states that the Christian should mortify (cause to die) worldly things, such as fornication, impurity, inordinate passions, evil desires, and avarice. 'For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience' (3:6).

Perhaps people in Paul's day were more responsive to the threat of fear than people today. For some, fear is still the basic motivation that forces them to search for God. They want to avoid the evil consequences of their behaviour, and, for this reason, they do what they think God requires of them. But there must be a higher motivation.

The hope of immortality as a motive

'If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die' (1 Cor. 15:32). Paul was using here a form of logic in which he reduced to the absurd the possibility that there is no immortality. He had risked his life on many occasions because of his belief in the afterlife. If in reality there is nothing beyond death, then he said that it would be better to eat and drink and not worry about moral living. The belief in a future life and the fact that actions affect where eternity will be spent are strong motives for moral living. Marshall declares, 'It cannot be denied that, if belief in the certainty of the annihilation of personality at death became the universal conviction of mankind, such a creed would exercise an extraordinarily depressing influence on the moral life of man.'⁵

However, look at Paul's affirmation of his belief in immortality and his appeal to moral living because of that belief: 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord' (1 Cor. 15:58). Paul's appeal includes a call to faithfulness in

LIST SOME OF THE THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES WITH WHICH PAUL DEALT IN HIS LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

AS YOU READ **MOTIVATION FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT**, NOTE SOME OF THE MOTIVES PEOPLE HAVE FOR SERVING GOD, AND FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE STATEMENTS REGARDING EACH MOTIVE.

One motive for good conduct is _____ and the desire to escape the _____ of _____.

(fear, wrath, God)

The belief in a future life and the fact that actions affect where eternity will be spent are strong motives for _____.

(moral living)

⁵Marshall, *New Testament Ethics*. p. 237.

producing the fruit of the Christian life which includes clean, moral living. The belief in immortality motivates us to maintain lives as free from sin as possible and to be as faithful as possible in service.

The motive of imitating Christ

Paul also appealed to the ideal of becoming more and more like Christ as a basis for good conduct. In Romans 15:5, the Christians in Rome were challenged to be like-minded towards one another according to Christ Jesus. He was appealing for unity among the Christians in order to move forward in fulfilment of the purposes of God for them. In Galatians 2:20, Paul gave his classic statement of identification with Christ in suffering and surrendering his personal desires in order to let Christ live in him. His goal was to yield his own desires to Christ in such a way that Christ's will could be superimposed upon his own without conflict. To do so involves the crucifixion of selfish goals and desires in order to be made into the image of Christ.

In Philippians 2:5, Paul says, 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus'. He continues to explain that one who has the mind of Christ allows Christ to be incarnate in his daily life. This experience requires daily self-emptying in order to let Christ rule. To live as a Christian is to imitate the life of Christ and, thereby, to become involved in service to our fellow-man. This commitment means surrendering our interests in order to let God's purpose work in and through us.

Is this goal in keeping with the contemporary emphasis in psychology that one needs to have a healthy regard for himself in order to live productively and with maturity? Is it possible to surrender oneself to Christ and still maintain one's own identity? Yes! The mature Christian will see that there is concord in imitating Christ as a way of life and living productively as a member of society. The Christian can be congruent, in the sense of Carl Roger's use of the term, by letting his life be an imitation of Christ.⁶ Thus the imitation of Christ is a healthy motive for living the Christian life.

Love as motivation

Paul mentioned the importance of love as a motive in living a moral life. 'Owe no man any thing but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law' (Rom. 13:8). The positive expression of love is better than the negative struggle to avoid those things which are prohibited by the Ten Commandments. 'Life at the level of love includes, and rises above, the best ethical requirements of the community.'⁷ To love one's neighbour is to respect him and his property. How can we love our neighbor and think of stealing his possessions, or telling him lies, or trying to take his wife from him?

'Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another' (Rom. 12:9-10). Here Paul said that love will resolve the problems related to interpersonal relations. When a Christian has love as a motive in his service to God, it will spill over in the same element in his attitudes towards his fellow-man.

⁶Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961), pp. 61-62, 282-3, 339-42.

⁷Henlee H. Barnett, *Introducing Christian Ethics* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1961), pp. 73-4.

CONTINUE DOING THE EXERCISE CONCERNING MOTIVATION FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT.

Paul appealed to a higher motive for good conduct, to be more and more like _____.

(Christ)

For the mature Christian, there is concord in imitating _____ and living productively in _____.

(Christ, society)

Another worthy motive for living a moral life is _____.

(love)

The positive expression of the Ten Commandments is _____.

(love)

Love is the answer to _____ problems.

(interpersonal)

The passage most frequently used to show the power of love as a motive in the Christian life is 1 Corinthians 13. Love is presented as essential for the proper use of gifts. The gifts of eloquence and speaking in unknown tongues are ineffective without love. Love is also basic to the gift of prophecy and the capacity to understand the great mysteries of the universe. Philanthropy can be practised without having love. Some practise asceticism without love. As Stewart says, all these practices were present in the various forms of Christianity in the day of Paul, and he judged them all to be inadequate.⁸

Duty as a motive

Paul also appeals to the sense of duty as a motive for the good life:

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

(1 Cor. 6:19-20)

Since the price paid for our salvation was so great, it is only right that we should give something in return for this gift. That return is to use our lives in serving and glorifying God, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service' (Rom. 12:1). When Paul spoke of that which is reasonable, he implied that it, therefore, becomes the just thing to do. There is much in Christianity based upon this sense of duty. Many of the Christian hymns appeal to us to consecrate ourselves to Him out of a sense of duty.

Reason as a motive

Paul also appealed to the use of reason and logic as a basis for living the good life. When he experienced the vision of Christ on the road to Damascus and the subsequent treatment in the city, he had to reason out what those experiences meant. He even spent some time in Arabia thinking through the plans that he would follow for the remainder of his life. He came to feel that to give his life as an apostle of the one who had saved him was reasonable. After he lived out his life in preaching and writing to the congregations he had established during his missionary journeys, he felt he had made the right choice. The one who accepts Christ today must follow the same procedure. If we reason under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will discover the value of following the example of Paul. He appealed to reason in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12, where he exhorted Christians to do that which is decent and appropriate, being sure to manifest a spirit of godliness in relationship to others.

Paul's Teachings on Sin

Paul referred to sin many times in his writings and recognized it as disobedience to God's laws and demands. There is the great sin of unbelief which condemns a person eternally. But this broad term can be broken down, especially as it deals with daily living. Paul classified sin in the broad categories of

⁸James S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ* (New York: Harper & Bros., n. d.), p. 1.

CONTINUE DOING THE EXERCISE CONCERNING MOTIVATION FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT.

First Corinthians 13 presents love as essential for the proper use of _____.

(*gifts*)

According to Paul, another motive for the good life is a sense of _____.

(*duty*)

Another motive for the good life is _____, or logic.

(*reason*)

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

Paul recognized sin as disobedience to God's _____ and _____.

(*laws, demands*)

sexual vices, worldly activities, sins of the tongue, and sins of the spirit.

Sexual vices

Paul frequently condemned the sins of adultery and fornication. He appealed for continence before marriage and faithfulness within the marriage bonds. *Lasciviousness* is a term which he used to refer to unbridled indulgence in the various classes of sexual vices. Passages where sexual vices are mentioned are: Romans 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:9; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3; and Colossians 3:5. *Fornication*, according to Paul, refers to sexual relations with the wife or husband of another person. Paul also referred to *sodomy* (known today as homosexuality) as a sin. He referred to the the sodomites' sexual partners, whom some call *catamites*, as 'the effeminate'.⁹

In recent years, there has been a general rejection of these high standards of sexual morality and much laxity in this whole area. When one lays aside the religious and scriptural basis for morality, it is easy to justify practices that would otherwise be condemned. We are beginning to see the results of this sexual freedom in its effects upon the body, mind, character, and self-respect of the people who have followed this erroneous teaching. Other civilizations have declined when moral decay set it. Many are asking if some of the Christian nations are not beginning to experience some of these same symptoms.

Paul also condemned the various classes of sexual perversion, including homosexuality. He saw these sins as quite rampant among the Gentiles in the Roman Empire. Apparently the religious and ethical standards of these cultures had very little to say against these sins. But Paul confronted them directly and gave some of his most scathing denunciations against them:

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another . . . and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.

(Rom. 1:24, 27)

Paul declared openly that the people who practise these sins will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Worldly activities

Paul spoke out against worldliness, drunkenness, and revellings (Gal. 5:21). He appealed to Christians not to keep company with the people of the world, since there cannot be any communion between Christ and Belial. He appealed to Christians to 'come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you' (2 Cor. 6:17). How are we to distinguish between the Christian and the non-Christian today, when they are so often found in the same places and participate in the same activities? The nature of the Christian is different; therefore, his likes and dislikes should be different, and his comportment should distinguish him from others. Paul insisted that Christians should not indulge in the same activities as

AS YOU CONTINUE TO READ PAUL'S TEACHINGS ON SIN, NOTE THE CATEGORIES OF SIN, AND DO THE EXERCISES FOR EACH CATEGORY.

One category of sin that Paul condemned is _____.

(sexual vices)

Some of the sexual vices Paul condemned are l _____, f _____, and s _____.

(lasciviousness, fornication, sodomy)

Paul condemned sexual perversion such as h _____.

(homosexuality)

Another of Paul's categories of sin is w _____ activities, including: w _____, d _____, and r _____.

(worldly, worldliness, drunkenness, revellings)

Paul admonished Christians not to keep company with the people of the _____.

(world)

⁹Marshall, *New Testament Ethics*, p. 280.

non-Christians:

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

(Rom. 13:13-14)

Paul had a lot to say about drunkenness. 'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit' (Eph. 5:18). He saw many evils resulting from drunkenness: poverty, lack of proper care for family members, violence while under the influence of alcohol, and improper treatment of others and oneself are just a few of the problems. While some countries see value in collecting the tax that comes from the sale of alcoholic beverages, they do not see the hidden costs of liquor in losses due to absenteeism and increased police protection.

Sins of the tongue

Paul condemned corrupt speech, saying that Christians should not participate in conversations using filthy language, profanities, and other evidences of a corrupt mind. He used three terms: 'corrupt speech', 'foul language', and 'scurrilous jesting'. Paul also prohibited the telling of lies one to another (Col. 3:9). He counselled the Christians in the various cities that they would experience constant struggles as they faced an antagonistic world and challenged them not to be influenced by the practices of the unconverted.

Gossip was probably as prevalent among the people in the day of Paul as it is today. He counselled Timothy that the wives of the deacons should not be slanderers (1 Tim. 3:11). In 2 Timothy 3:3, he mentioned that a sign of the times was false accusations of others. He advised the aged women of the church not to be false accusers (Titus 2:3). He condemned those who carry false tales behind the backs of others, as well as those who speak openly of others in a harmful manner. He was speaking against the destruction of the good name of others, one of the tendencies of all cultures and of all times. Paul agreed with James that the tongue is a small member but capable of a great deal of harm to others.

Sins of the spirit

Paul spoke of many other forms of sin and evil in addition to those mentioned in this lesson. Egoism, manifested among some ministers, was a great problem, 'Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds' (Phil. 1:15-16). In the same epistle he pleaded that nothing be done through strife or vainglory (Phil. 2:3). Covetousness, extortion, and insolence could be included also as sins of the spirit that Paul condemned. Also he warned against enmities, strifes, factions, jealousies, wraths, and divisions. All these statements in the epistles make it clear that Paul placed a lot of emphasis upon the moral life.

The Fruit of the Spirit

In Galatians 5, Paul presented a list of the virtues that he considered to be the fruit of the Holy Spirit in one's life. These virtues cover the moral qualities of man that result in a good relationship with God and his fellow-man.

CONTINUE DOING THE EXERCISES CONCERNING PAUL'S TEACHINGS ON SIN.

Another of Paul's categories of sin is sins of the _____.
(tongue)

Some of the sins of the tongue are p _____, f _____, l _____, g _____, and s _____.
(profanity, filthy language, gossip, slander)

The sins which Paul included in his final category of sins of the spirit included:

(Compare your answers with the text.)

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit covers the moral qualities of man that result in a good relationship with _____ and his _____.
(Compare your answers with the text.)

Paul considered **brotherly love** as the principal or cardinal virtue. This virtue is the first fruit of the Spirit. Love is mentioned here in Galatians, but 1 Corinthians 13 is the chapter that is dedicated to the supremacy of love. For Paul, it is the all encompassing virtue that produces the other Christian virtues. He finished 1 Corinthians with the statement, 'Let all your things be done with charity' (1 Cor. 16:14). He challenged the Galatians to serve one another with love (Gal. 5:13). In the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul challenged his readers to support one another with patience in love (Eph. 4:2). Paul also counselled Christians to 'walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour' (Eph. 5:2). The apostle urged the Philippians to announce the gospel with love (Phil. 2:1-11). If Christians can come to have this kind of love, then others will be drawn to Christ by their service.

In his salutation to the Colossians, Paul mentioned the love they had for the saints, which had been commented upon by others in other cities (Col. 1:4). That love was based upon the hope which they had for the future. As they thought of their own problems, they realized that love towards others united and impelled them to sacrifice in order that others might come to know Christ. In his explanation of the apparel of the Christian, he mentioned that above all else they should be clothed with love.

Paul told the Thessalonians that their testimony had been very good and had achieved wonders for God (1 Thess. 1:3). He commended them to God in order that He might cause them to grow and to abound in love for one another (1 Thess. 3:12). He even mentioned that it was not necessary to admonish them to love one another because they had already learned this lesson (1 Thess. 4:9).

To Timothy, Paul wrote, 'For God hath not give us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind' (2 Tim. 1:7). Thus the recurring theme is evident in the writings of Paul, where he recognized that love is the basis for maintaining right relationships with others.

Peace is another fruit of the Spirit. This fruit is the inner tranquillity one feels when he has a right relationship with God. In Romans 5:1, we read, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Peace is the automatic result of a right relationship with Jesus Christ brought about by the forgiveness of sins. The spiritual fruit of peace is a great quality to possess, and it enables one to face each day and the future with confidence.

Joy is another important fruit of the Spirit. It has to do with the general tone of the life of the Christian. The inner serenity that joy gives makes us bubble up in effervescence through our service to our Lord. Joy dispels bitterness and pessimism, because one knows that God is on his side. This element contributes positively to the enjoyment of life and thus to its productivity. Joy given by the Spirit is not limited to those with physical accommodations; rather, it is potentially the possession of every person regardless of his economic status.

Paul listed **patience** among the fruit of the Spirit. Patience helps us to control ourselves as we face the adversities of life. Paul emphasized the importance of patience in interpersonal relations. He admonished the Ephesians to be longsuffering in forbearing one another (Eph. 4:2). With patience, we can avoid many problems for ourselves and for others. When we are

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

One fruit of the Spirit is _____ which Paul considered to be the principal or cardinal virtue. (brotherly love)

Another fruit of the Spirit is _____ (peace)

Another fruit of the Spirit is _____ (Compare your answer with the text.)

Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit includes _____ (patience)

PART II: THE ETHICS OF NON-PAULINE WRITINGS

Introduction

The epistles of Peter, James, Jude, and John all contain significant ethical teachings. The Pauline authorship of Hebrews has been questioned by most scholars; therefore, the ethical teachings of Hebrews will be noted briefly in this chapter.

James

Many Bible scholars have said that James is almost exclusively a book about ethical matters. The purpose of this epistle is to point out a religion that is pure and without blemish (1:27). James insisted that genuine faith produces a good moral life. He presented two evidences of a genuine faith: concern for others and personal purity. In these two qualities, religion and ethics are united. Faith and religious experience manifest themselves by not distinguishing between persons of different social classes when they come to the house of God (2:1-13), by being ready to share material things with those in need in a spirit of Christian love (2:8, 14-16), by controlling the tongue (3:1-12), and by demonstrating true wisdom instead of false wisdom (3:3-18). Wisdom is characterized by purity, peacefulness, kindness, amiableness, mercifulness, and good fruit. Wisdom disposes of uncertainty and hypocrisy.

One of the better known passages in James has to do with the control of the tongue (3:1-12). James says that the tongue is a member of the body which is practically impossible to control. Even though man has been able to domesticate animals, birds, and serpents, he has not yet domesticated the tongue. A fruit tree will bear fruit according to the kind of tree that it is, but the tongue can produce blessings and curses from the same source. Man's task is to control the tongue so that only blessings are emitted from it.

The oppression of the poor by the rich was also a concern of James (5:1-6). The rich were not paying just wages in spite of the fact that the workmen had demanded them. James prophesied that they would experience greater sufferings than that which they had brought upon the poor:

Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

(James 5:2-3)

James predicted that the rich would not live to enjoy the possessions that they had accumulated.

James suggests that the attitudes of lust and covetousness contribute to conflict that spills over into war (4:1ff.). Calumny (the act of uttering false charges or misrepresentations maliciously calculated to damage another's reputation) against one's neighbour is rebuked, for this is what produces ill will between people (4:11-12). Thus we see that the Epistle of James, in a sense, is an amplification of some of the teachings presented by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Writings of John

Revelation

The Book of Revelation was written by John during a time of persecution of Christians by the Roman emperors. John

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

James insisted that genuine _____ produces a good moral life. He presented two evidences of a genuine faith which are:

1. _____
2. _____

(faith; 1. concern for others; 2. personal purity)

In this paragraph we learn that James was concerned about the _____ of the poor by the _____.

(oppression, rich)

The attitudes of l_____ and c_____ are also rebuked, as is the sin of c_____.

(lust, covetousness, calumny)

encouraged the Christians to face and respond to persecution. Some have criticized the negative attitude towards civil authorities presented in the book, because they see this as unchristian and different from Jesus' teaching to love and forgive one's enemies. But the central message of the book is assurance of the ultimate triumph of Christ, the Lamb, over the beast, which is a symbol of the totalitarian state of Rome (13:1-10). The second beast is the false prophet and symbolizes the propaganda necessary to promote this type of government (13:11-18). This book presents an optimistic message, which encourages faith in the ultimate triumph of God and His forces over evil. Thus John presented a political ethic. More will be said about the relationship of the Christian faith to political governments in the practical section of this book.

The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John was written in order 'that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name' (20:31). Since salvation is the purpose of the writer, ethical teachings are not as evident as in other writings in the New Testament.

Gnosticism was prevalent in the day of John, and he desired to counteract its teaching that Christ was not like every other man in His nature. *Gnosticism*, derived from the Greek word for *knowledge*, held that material things are evil; therefore, a person's flesh is evil. The spirit of those with 'superior knowledge' was thought to be unaffected by the evil deeds of the flesh. Since the Gnostics believed that the flesh was evil, they denied that God had come into the world in the flesh. Thus John began his book with a clear declaration, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (1:1). In the same chapter he continued, 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us' (1:14).

Ethical content is present in the Gospel. John emphasized the importance of brotherly love. 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another' (13:34). The interesting qualification in this verse is the statement 'As I have loved you' because the love of Christ is limitless racially, socially, and culturally. Thus the practice of this commandment will involve the same kind of love on the part of the Christian.

The Epistles of John

The First Epistle of John has been called an ethical commentary on the Gospel of John. It elaborates on the new commandment of love that Jesus gave, and John encouraged his 'little children' to love one another. He also emphasized the importance of fellowship with God and with one another. One must walk in the light, confess his sins, and obey the commandments of God in order to enjoy fully this fellowship (1 John 1:9). John also gives us a list of outward evidences of sonship: righteousness (2:29), brotherly love (3:11-24), and the affirmation that Jesus is the Son of God (5:1-12). The epistle emphasizes five qualities for the Christian: righteousness, truth, regeneration, love, and security. The good moral life is shown by man's good works, a well as by what he says:

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

(1 John 3:17-18)

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

In Revelation, John presented a p_____ ethic.

(political)

Since G_____ taught that the f_____ was evil, John felt that it was necessary to make clear that Christ was both the W_____ and also 'made f_____ and dwelt among us'.

(Gnostics, flesh, Word, flesh)

A scripture reference that is an example of the ethical content of the Gospel of John is found in _____. In that text, 'As I have loved you' includes three areas of love: r_____, s_____, and c_____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

First John is an ethical commentary on the Gospel of John because it elaborates on the new commandment of l_____ and because John encouraged l_____ one for another. He also emphasized that f_____ is important.

(love, love, fellowship)

Three things one must do to enjoy fellowship with God and with one another are: _____, _____, and _____.

(walk in the light, confess one's sins, obey the commandments of God)

Five qualities which 1 John emphasized for Christians are: r_____, t_____, r_____, l_____, and s_____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The Second Epistle of John is similar to the First, in that it also emphasizes persevering in the truth and not listening to the false teachers who try to deceive. It is addressed to 'the elect lady and her children' (v. 1). Some believe that this expression is symbolic language which refers to the church in general.¹¹ Another possibility is that John directed his message to a woman, possibly a widow, in order to encourage her to live a consecrated life and be faithful to the Lord. Perhaps she shared his letter with other Christians in the church.

The Third Epistle of John was directed to a man named Gaius, who was much loved by John because of the Christian hospitality which he showed for evangelists and missionaries. John congratulated him for his interest in serving others in the name of Christ. He is a good example for Christians today. John admonished him to 'follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God' (v. 11). The doing of good or evil is the result of faith that one has or does not have.

The churches of the first century were not exempted from problems created by such men as Diotrefes, who always wanted to have first place in the group (v. 9). For this reason he did not want to receive John and his friends, and he expelled the friends of John from the church. Surely the other people must have suffered because of this problem, just as churches in the world today suffer when there are interpersonal problems within the membership. These problems prevent people from growing spiritually and from moving ahead in their major goal of winning others. To serve the Lord brings opposition and problems. These problems should not defeat the Christians; rather they should be seen as evidences of growth and progress against the power of evil as the Kingdom of God is extended.

Hebrews

The theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews is the supremacy of Christ over all previous revelations. Christ is superior to the prophets, to Moses and the Law, to the priests, to the sacrificial system, and to angelic revelation. He is God's final and complete revelation to man. The author of this book presents this thesis because some Christians had been tempted to return to Judaism, thereby turning away from the teachings of Jesus. For this reason, the author emphasizes the importance of loyalty and faithfulness to Christ and warns against the dangers of returning to other systems.

One of the virtues repeatedly emphasized in the epistle is the importance of faith. Chapter 11 has a long list of people in Old Testament times who had achieved greatness because of their faith. They trusted God in spite of the immediate trials they faced, which at times seemed to overwhelm them. The writer warned that it is impossible to renew one's faith if he abandons or falls from the Way (6:4-6).

Brotherly love is another virtue which is alluded to by the author, 'And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works' (10:24). Life would be significantly different if we could come to fulfil the ideal of this verse—each one seeking to provoke the other to love and to do good works.

¹¹Joseph Angus and Samuel Green, *Los Libros de la Biblia (Nuevo Testamento)*, trans. Carlos A. García (El Paso: Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, n. d.), pp. 198-9.

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

The Second Epistle of John emphasizes p_____ in the t_____ and not listening to f_____ t_____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

John's Third Epistle congratulates its recipient on showing h_____ and s_____ o_____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. The churches in the first centuries never faced problems from those who wanted first place in the group. _____
2. Churches today also have problems arising from the interpersonal relationships of their members. _____
3. The problems arising from opposition should not defeat those who serve the Lord. _____

(1. False, 2. True, 3. True)

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

The theme of Hebrews is the supremacy of _____ over all other revelations.

(Christ)

One virtue which is emphasized in Hebrews is the importance of _____.

(faith)

Another Christian virtue mentioned in Hebrews is _____.

(brotherly love)

'Let brotherly love continue' (13:1) emphasizes the need of a very important element within the Christian community. If brotherly love abounds among believers, there will be a sense of fellowship which will probably make it less tempting to drift away into other religious groups.

Another ethical teaching found in the Epistle is the affirmation that sexual relations within marriage are right before God, 'Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge' (13:4). Sexual relations outside the marriage bond are condemned, but God recognizes sex as a legitimate expression of love between two marital partners.

Hebrews 12:1-2 challenges every Christian to strive to move ahead in the matter of living the Christian life. This passage uses the analogy of an athletic contest and may be applied to every relationship in life. 'Running the race' may mean being a good husband and father, a good employee or employer, or an honest and upright politician. The writer challenged his readers to 'lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us'. Sins are obstacles which impede our functioning to the maximum of our capacity. We run the spiritual race because of our own satisfaction in following this way of life, because of our faithfulness to Christ, and because of the witnesses who surround us and observe our participation.

The Epistles of Peter

Peter directed his first letter to the Christians who were scattered because of persecution to various cities of Asia Minor. He began with a doxology of praise to God because of the living hope Christians have through the blood of Jesus Christ. After speaking of the extraordinary inheritance in God, he called the Christians to a holy life. Involved in this call are the ethical requirements of sobriety and holiness in every area of life. God is the model to be followed. His standard of holiness may be reached through obedience to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and sincere practice of brotherly love (1 Pet. 1:22).

Peter challenged Christians to leave behind the things which give evidence of spiritual immaturity. 'Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings' covers the prerequisites of the holy life and forms the basis for good moral character (1 Pet. 2:1). These evils are committed in relationship to one's fellow-man. When one removes these evils from his life, he is then capable of receiving and assimilating the sincere milk of the Word, which will make him more Christlike.

Peter also appealed to his Christian brothers to abstain from carnal desires, which war against the soul (1 Pet. 2:11). He challenged man to have love towards his neighbour, fear towards God, and respect towards political leaders, 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well' (1 Pet. 2:13-14). This call to submission is difficult to follow today, since emphasis is placed so much upon the right to be free from all obligations to others. Peter wrote in the days of slavery and challenged slaves, as Christians, to be submissive and faithful in serving their masters (1 Pet. 2:18-19). This submission was

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

Another ethical teaching in Hebrews is the affirmation that sexual relations are right within _____ but are condemned outside of the marriage _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Hebrews 12:1-2 challenges every Christian to strive to move ahead in living the _____ life.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

In his first epistle, Peter set forth the ethical requirements of _____ and _____.

(sobriety, holiness)

Peter challenged Christians to leave behind the things which indicate spiritual immaturity: m _____, g _____, h _____, e _____, e _____ speakings. These evils are all committed in relationship to one's _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Peter also challenged man to love his _____, to fear _____, and to respect _____ leaders.

(neighbour, God, political)

also relevant in relationship to the political leaders in the Roman Empire. The purposes of civil government will be discussed in the practical section of this book, but it can be said here that one of the duties of civil servants is to maintain order and punish those who violate the laws. A great example of submission is Jesus Christ, who was submissive to the death on the cross (1 Pet. 2:21).

Submission is a quality which enriches marriage and the relationship between spouses (1 Pet. 3:1-9). The wife who is a dedicated Christian may be able to win her unconverted husband through her kind testimony. Peter cautioned against putting more emphasis on outward adornment of the body than on the inward adorning of the heart—a meek and quiet spirit. The husband has the duty to dwell with his wife in a way that gives honour to her, recognizing that this relationship will be a testimony of God's grace and thus there will be no barriers to successful prayers.

Peter encouraged the Christians with words that are similar to those Christ used in His Sermon on the Mount, 'Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing' (1 Pet. 3:8-9).

The Epistle of First Peter concludes by saying that the Christian should be sober, prayerful, and fervent in love, because 'charity shall cover the multitude of sins' (1 Pet. 4:8). Peter anticipated that Christians were going to have to suffer, and they should be prepared to be faithful unto the Lord in the midst of persecution. He repeatedly mentioned the need to be strong in facing adversity:

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

(1 Pet. 4:12-13)

Peter gave counsel to the spiritual leaders, saying that they were not to work by force but voluntarily 'not for filthy lucre (dishonest gain), but of a ready mind' (1 Pet. 5:2b). The responsibility of the Christian pastor is to feed the flock in faithfulness, not as one who is lord over them, but as an example of a servant.

In the Second Epistle, Peter encouraged the Christians to be fruitful by producing virtues that are compatible with the moral life:

And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

(2 Pet. 1:5-7)

These qualities in the Christian will be a great testimony of his maturity and influence upon society. The Christian will stand out as one who is different from everyone else in the world. As one produces these graces, he will be able to stand against the trials that will come because of his faith. He will be discerning as false teachers mix among the Christians for the purpose of deceiving them.

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

Peter encouraged _____ in marriage.

(*submission*)

According to 1 Peter, the Christian should be s _____, p _____, and fervent in l _____.

(*sober, prayerful, love*)

Peter admonished Christians to be faithful in the midst of _____.

(*persecution*)

In his Second Epistle, Peter encouraged Christians to be fruitful by producing _____ that are compatible with the _____ life. These virtues or qualities will testify of a Christian's _____ and _____ on society.

(*virtues, moral, maturity, influence*)

Jude

The Epistle of Jude was written to Christian Jews who needed to be encouraged and enlightened about false teachers who were sowing false doctrines among them. It seems that some were teaching libertinism in an effort to make them fall away from Christ. The false teachers were turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and denying the deity of Jesus Christ (v. 4). The writer pointed out how God had punished and judged evil men in history, and there was always the threat that He would repeat this treatment towards these false teachers. Jude challenged the Christians to continue their love for God and thereby help to convince those who were in doubt. In this way, they would be 'pulling them out of the fire' (v. 23).

Conclusion

Our day has been characterized by the tendency to discard the traditional ways, including behaviour, styles, values, and religion. Many are determined to chart their own course, and some launch out into unexplored waters. We are in an age of relativity and pluralism regarding moral and spiritual values. Many are asking, 'Where will it all end?'

Probably there will be a point at which these people will return once more to search for stability in the moral and spiritual foundations for society. The Bible truths are ignored or rejected by many; nevertheless, they continue to stand.

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

The challenge of Jude is for Christians to love _____
and thereby convince those who _____

(*God, doubt*)

Even though many reject the Bible truths, yet they _____.

(*stand*)

Home Study Exercise

Basic assignment (*Levels 1, 2, and 3*). Do the following exercises.

Part 1: The Ethics of the Pauline Epistles

1. What is the basis of Paul's ethical message?

2. What was Paul's approach to teaching ethics?

3. Describe Paul's eschatological viewpoint.

4. What effect did Paul's eschatological viewpoint have on his ethical teachings?

5. List some ways in which Paul indicated the Mosaic Law was valuable.

6. List the motivations for ethical conduct that Paul mentions in his writings. (Continue on the next page)

7. What are the sex vices mentioned by Paul?

8. What did Paul say should be the Christian's attitude towards the world?

9. What did Paul consider to be the principal ethical virtue? Illustrate.

10. List the fruit of the Spirit named by Paul in Galatians 5.

Part 2: The Ethics of Non-Pauline Writings

11. What two evidences of genuine faith does James give?

12. What kind of ethic is presented in the Book of Revelation?

13. Explain John 13:34.

14. Why is 1 John called an ethical commentary on the Gospel of John?

15. List five qualities for the Christian given in 1 John.

16. What view did the author of Hebrews take towards sex relations outside the marriage bond?

17. Explain Hebrews 12:1-2.

18. What was Peter's position towards government?

19. In 2 Peter, what is the value placed upon the Christian's moral life?

20. What is the challenge of Jude?

Supplementary assignment (*Levels 2 and 3*). Read pages 69-97 in *Introducing Christian Ethics*, and do the following exercise.

1. List the theological doctrines upon which Paul's ethical teachings are based.
2. What are Paul's ethical principles?
3. Describe the usefulness of other New Testament writings for Christian ethics.
4. Describe the ethical nature of the Holy Spirit.

Advanced assignment (*Level 3*). Do the following additional exercise based on the above reading assignment.

1. What is the relationship between Paul's idea of love and his idea of law?
2. Why is the imitation of Christ important to the practice of Christian moral living?
3. Explain the role of the Holy Spirit in the individual Christian's moral life.
4. Discuss the statement 'Recovery of the Spirit as the central moral force in the church and the individual is imperative.'

Seminar Discussion

1. Relate Paul's emphasis of being 'in Christ' to Jesus' emphasis on the Kingdom of God. What bearing do these emphases have on moral living?
2. Compare Paul's ethical teachings to the teachings of Jesus.
3. Discuss motives for Christian moral living. Which motives are best?
4. Compare Old Testament and New Testament ethics, showing how New Testament ethics rests upon Old Testament ethical teachings.