

Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 110
The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit

Faith #19

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Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings, brethren. This is tape number 19 of the series on the subject of "faith." The overall series is "The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit." We have been covering the specific words—that is, the Greek words—translated as "faith" in our English translation. We have covered a considerable number of them, having now come down to the word *apistos*.

In the last couple of tapes, we covered the earlier part of this word, but we want, hopefully, to complete that word today, and to go ahead and complete one or two others before we get into the basic word that I have been holding—reserving—for the latter part of this series in order to thoroughly explain this matter of faith. It is a word that places specific emphasis upon *the* specific "faith" entitled, in the Greek, "the faith," which is sometimes confused a little bit in the Greek translation. It is *the* definite *faith*, and we are going to positively identify that when we finally get to that particular word.

But this one is the word *apistos*. As I have explained to you so many times, the "a" on the front negates the meaning of the word *pistos*, so that in this case, it means "a lack of faith" or "unbelieving," as it is translated a number of times. But it is the negative of "faith"—that is, the lack of faith. So we are going to move right into this aspect of it once again, hopefully completing this word and a couple of others, as I said, before we get into that broader term that is basically translated as "faith"—the Greek word *pistis*—p-i-s-t-i-s—which is very broadly used in the New Testament.

Now, we have covered in this word *apistos* a number of subtopics. Number one: "What are the tragic results of faithlessness?" We went through that and explained that back in tape number 17.

Then we talked about the fact that "if we are called of God, God requires us to evidence faith in our lives." He wants us to have faith, and not to be faithless.

The next tape was tape number 18, and we covered subtopics such as, "Those things believed by the called are thought incredible by the faithless." Events and circumstances in our lives are going to be so phenomenal and unusual, they are going to be thought to be incredible by those who do not possess that faith. Yet, if we really believe, we ought not to be mesmerized, or create a situation of awe for ourselves, because of the things that happen. If we really believe, why should we stand back in awe? Awe does not evidence real faith. Faith, if we come to really believe it, then we believe it—we know it's going to happen. Therefore, we are not caught off-guard, we do not manifest the evidences of unbelief. And awe is an evidence of unbelief—we stand in amazement of something that happens. But if we really believe it—we have that confidence—then we stand, not in awe, but in deep appreciation, and we glorify God in our confidence, our assurance, and our belief, and we are awesomely respectful toward God.

Then, next, we covered the point, "Believers and unbelievers are classified." So, God classifies them, as we saw back in 1 Corinthians 6, verses 1 through 8.

But then we also went into the subtopic, "Families are sometimes divided between believers and unbelievers." Actually, not sometimes, but very frequently they are so divided. Maybe not immediate family, but oftentimes the larger family is divided considerably—parents against children, children against parents, one individual against grandparents, maternal grandparents, paternal grandparents, or aunts, or uncles, or whomever they may be. Oftentimes, God does not call an entire family to believe the Truth of God. So, you will, almost invariably, experience somebody within a family that does not believe and have that confidence in God's Truth. So families are, indeed, divided.

And then, next, we covered the fact that "some miracles are for the benefit of unbelievers, while others are for believers." So you have some for unbelievers, and others for believers. God made that very clear in 1 Corinthians the fourteenth chapter. That concluded tape number 18.

Now, we have come down to tape number 19, which we want to address today for your benefit. We begin with the subtopic, "When is one called, worse than an unbeliever?" When—at what time, under what circumstances—is one called of God, worse than an unbeliever? Here in 1 Timothy 5 and verse 8. 1 Timothy 5 and let's note verse 8, however, we are going to read verses one through sixteen, because I want us to get the entire context here. But first let's read verse 8: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." And if you will remember, the word "infidel" is exactly the same as "unbeliever." They are synonymous terms. So, we are talking, now, about somebody who was called by God to understand, and to act on the Word—to believe it and to manifest that belief in action—but who obviously failed, and in failing, we become worse than unbelievers.

Now, let's go back and pick up the context, because we really need this in order to understand what Paul is saying here to the young evangelist Timothy. He said, beginning in verse 1: "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father." In other words, we are talking about an older gentleman in the Truth of God. You do not rebuke an elder. This is what Paul wrote to an evangelist—Timothy. And, yet, I want to tell you brethren, we had colossal circumstances in the church in which young men were sent out, under the auspices of a particular organization, who had no regard for an older man. I mean, they abused them. Here is a specific command of God to an evangelist, if you please, and I don't mean somebody lower down in the pecking order, as it was commonly termed. I want to be careful, because God Himself *did* authorize certain positions, and so on, but, you know, positions of responsibility, when they turn political, become a pecking order, not positions of service. So, let's understand that there is a major difference involved in it. But, here now, Paul, within the commission that was given to him, was instructed by God to write to this young evangelist, saying, don't rebuke an elder, "but intreat him as a father." You come to him with the greatest affection and kindness.

How did you go to your father? Well, maybe I shouldn't ask that because I'm afraid some of you went with no respect at all, especially some of you who are younger—if you just think back to the times when you were growing up. But I'll guarantee you, some of us didn't. We would have wound up who knows where if we had gone with disrespect toward our parents. But today, people take exception

with that. They are going to say what they please, and how they please, regardless of whom they are addressing. Well, in this case, the Apostle Paul stressed, "[You shall not rebuke] an elder, but [you are to] intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren."

Now, even when you get down to the younger people, you do not act as a superior, but you act with them, as one who is equal with you. My brothers are equal with me in every way. I don't hold any preeminence over any of my brothers or sisters. In that family, they are all the same. So, here the Apostle Paul says to Timothy, even when you go to the younger people in the church, you treat them as equals—as brothers or sisters.

"[And] the elder women as mothers." Now, how did you treat your mother? How should we treat our mothers? That's exactly how you are going to treat the older women in the church. Oh, my, the stories that I've heard about how some people have abused this charge.

"[T]he younger as sisters, with all purity. Honour widows that are widows indeed." I don't mean those who claim to be widows, I mean those who are widows indeed.

Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God [If any of us have close relatives within the confines of God's Truth, or outside of it, it is our responsibility to take care of them. So says God]. Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

Now this tells who a "widow indeed" is. Who is she? She trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. I wonder how many of our widows are doing that—very concerned for other people; very concerned for the Body; very concerned for the operation, or the work, the undertaking of others who are in the Body itself? She continues in supplications and prayers, night and day. Why? Well, there is a reason for this. It is because she is being sustained, and God does not sustain anybody for naught, period. What we must understand is that they cannot be busybodies, out running around and bearing rumors, or

tattling, or whatever. We are going to see that later on. But what we must understand is that, if they are supported by the church, then they are rendering a service—a work—and that work, that service, is the upholding of the concepts and the principles of that Body, and praying for the other people. They have the time; they can spend their hours in prayer, and God is going to require it.

I want you to understand that God is yet to judge, and when God judges, He is not going to forget the terms of that responsibility uttered through His servant Paul. Not at all. Now it says, "[S]he that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth . . ." That is, she does not have any great reserves, and she has to look now to the Body—to the Church—for sustenance, or support. "[She] trusteth in God." She is going to have to put her trust in God. I don't mean carping; I don't mean uttering condemnatory remarks; I don't mean in batting the lips concerning people within the church—talking about the church, or talking about circumstances within the church. I mean that she is one who trusts God—who believes that God will take care of it, and whose attitude is right before God at all times. She continues "in supplications and prayers night and day." She has the freedom to so do, and she is supported for that reason.

"But she that liveth in pleasure . . ." That is, she is going to do the whims of her own mind. She is merely taking advantage. "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." That's hard to accept, isn't it? She "that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." Let me assure you—any of you—because we may all fall into these categories somewhere and at some given time, that there is a great deal of satisfaction that goes with supporting such a widow. Nobody minds it. But when you support somebody who turns around and verbally abuses—who says things, who never performs the functions and responsibilities that God has imposed upon her—it would be no different than if I took a salary as a minister of God, and I did nothing. Would you appreciate that, or would you say, "Well, I wonder why he is taking a salary?" Well, you would probably say a lot more than that. But what about anybody else? We're not entitled by birth to anything. That is a concept of this world. We are entitled to responsibility because God brought us into existence, and by that existence, we bear the responsibility of work as long as we live. Our work changes—indeed it does. When we grow older, when we are more infirm, we then may have to spend more of our time in prayer, even if we just have to sit in a chair because we can't get on our knees, or because we can't do this, or we can't do that. I understand those things. But at least we can pray, can't

we? And that is a *measurable* service. Oh, if our widows were just praying their hearts out for the continuity of our little operation, and for the success of every member within it, it would be a volume of prayers going up to God. And that God requires.

But she that liveth in pleasure [that is, she is going to do what she pleases] is dead while she liveth. And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. [So, now, he is instructing Timothy in how to behave before members within the Body, and how to handle widow situations. Now let's continue:] But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

So, you see, we as the servants of God—even bearing responsibilities—if we do not take care of those responsibilities incumbent upon us, we are worse than people who have never been called or chosen. And God is going to judge us, as I said. Let us never forget that in the day of judgment, God is going to remember these basic requirements. He's the one who gave them. I didn't. I didn't write this book at all. I am merely telling you what is written here. And if we want to be born into the Family of God, and to exercise the responsibilities of tomorrow, we are going to have to do those things that are incumbent upon us today. So, we *must* take care of our own, we must be aware of those needs, and take care of them in the best way possible.

But that doesn't mean that they do not, themselves, bear responsibilities, because God told them what they were to do. Now, are they doing it, or are they chipping away—are they creating consternation and difficulties constantly, either for the ministry, or for the members of the family? If they are doing that, are they worthy of the consideration they are being given? Now, that doesn't absolve us of a responsibility, perhaps, but it does mean that the widow may run into problems, indeed.

Now let us notice verse 9: "Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old [that is, sixty years of age], having been the wife of one man." That is, if she has had but one husband, and she has been loyal and she has been faithful, then she can be taken in and given Church consideration. I didn't write it. There it is in black and white.

Now, we have inherited circumstances from the church—circumstances that are not altogether administratively correct in many, many areas—in many ways. The doctrine was never the problem, but the way it was carried out *was* a problem, indeed.

"Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man." You can figure that out as well as I can. It means simply that no widow who has been married more than once can be taken into the fold, and it also means that any widow under sixty years of age is not to be taken into the fold—if we were to carry it out precisely.

Now, also, here is a basic requirement: "Well reported of for good works." What is she doing? I mean, is she spending her time serving the Church? We are not entitled to anything. We are the recipients of the blessings of God when we faithfully obey. A worker must work diligently—he must effectively carry out the responsibilities that are given to him. He must do it honorably, as though he were doing it before God. And then he can count on the blessings of God. A widow, therefore, must carry out the responsibilities that are indicated here, or otherwise, she falls under the category of an unbeliever—a faithless individual. So, then, she must be well reported of for good works.

Now, obviously, if the days advance and one becomes infirm and cannot possibly get around, no physical responsibility is expected. But what about praying? What about upholding, verbally, the work, the responsibility, the Church—others within the organization?

Well reported of for her good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet [That doesn't mean you have to bathe them every day; that's not what it is talking about. But have you really, effectively served them to the best of your ability?], if she have relieved the afflicted [That is, now having been supported and sustained, is she spending her time serving those who are sick—ill, afflicted, depressed, troubled?], if she have diligently followed every good work.

There are the conditions. I did not lay them down, my dear brethren, but God did, and they are a very, very basic requirement.

Now, "But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ . . ." No longer do they want to really serve the Body—the Body that is Christ, the members in particular of that organization—serving them in all of the areas that we have illustrated up above here. Paul made them very clear. "[F]or when," as a younger individual, "they have begun to wax wanton against Christ [those members] . . ." That's how you serve Christ. You can't go up to heaven and serve Him up there. He doesn't need you up there. Remember the illustration He gave of that cup of cold water? "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of these, you have done it unto me." So He tells us what we should do, and the responsibilities incumbent upon us.

So he said: "But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith." When they are younger, if they grow displeased, if the attitude changes, they are going to cast off their first faith and they are going to go do what the flesh dictates. They are going to go marry. And how many times has that happened? So, when we want to be taken in as one supported by the Body, are we ready to divest ourselves of our own inclinations and to become the servants of Christ? Is that what you want as a widow? Then you are acceptable in the sight of God.

"And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers . . ." "Have you heard the latest?" They've got stories to tell, and stories that should never be told, because I want to say once again, brethren, when you start discussing any other member in the church, you are out of bounds. It is not acceptable. Now, you can say all of the good that you want. If you want to praise everyone continually, go right ahead. But the minute you become negative and you start judging, and evaluating, and criticizing, you are out of step. We do not have that responsibility.

So, "withal they learn to be idle." That is, the provision has been made for them; they don't have to go and work; they no longer have to discharge the ordinary responsibilities of life, and consequently, they have the time to do these things. "[W]andering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." Now, of course, that was only in Corinth, no one would do that today, would she?

I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan. If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

Now let's go back to verse 8: "But if any provide not for his own . . ." And this involves every human being who bears responsibility—I don't care whether it's widows, or whomever it may be (in this case, of course, the specific emphasis is upon those who have "widows indeed," who are aged, who are past sixty, and who have unique problems). "[I]f any provide not for his own [that is, the younger ones must take care of them], and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." If it is within our own households, then God has given us that responsibility.

Alright, there are times, then, when even though we believe, we can be worse than those who have never seen nor understood. Let's notice another example of that over here in Titus. Titus 1 and we are going to read verses 15 and 16, and then I am going to get it in context by going back to verse 9. Titus 1 and beginning first in verse 15: "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving [who do not have confidence. The word "unbelieving" here, now, is the word *apistos*.] is nothing pure." The unbelieving seem to manifest negativism in everything. Nothing is pure to them. They are troubled and perplexed about everything that is happening, and about everything everybody else does. Have you ever encountered that type of thing? It's a negative philosophy in life. Nothing is right. "[B]ut even their mind and conscience is defiled." They don't see anything pure in anything. Anything anybody does is always wrong. They profess that they know God. Oh yes, they don't give up that concept. They *know* that they know what's right. They are right before God. "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable . . ." What works? What they've been saying; their attitudes. Notice it up here: "Unto the pure all things are pure." If we have a good, right outlook, we don't worry about these things—we don't worry about them at all—we just do what we know we should do, and go on, and we don't worry about it.

"[B]ut unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure." There's a problem with everything that goes on. Well, you know, when we take that

attitude, we can rip to pieces every human being alive. There isn't anything we can't do about it.

. . . but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

I can well imagine the circumstances to which the Apostle Paul must have been referring when writing here to Titus. Let's go back, now, and get it in context, beginning in verse 9: "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught . . ." The context of what he is analyzing here, now, is faithful obedience to those things which we have been taught. Now, how many of us have been taught? We know, but it is awfully hard to get ourselves to do it, isn't it—to live up to it, to restrain ourselves from the things that our minds and our very natures dictate, or demand?

I cannot help but wonder, when it comes to various responsibilities, and so on, how many of us thank God for having learned the Truth, so that we can change and not do the things that we have practiced in times past, when our natures would just naturally recoil? We would be very unhappy, and we would say, "Well, does that mean this and this and this?" No, now we look at it and say, "Thank God. I certainly don't want to be doing the wrong thing in the first place, because I am hopeful of being in God's Kingdom." Or, do we really believe that when that day comes, we can argue God into it? Is that our assumption? If we argue the people into it today, and we can put the minister, or the family member, or whomever it may be, into the corner—back him into a corner and put him on the spot—and we can get our desires, our expectations, and our wants, or whatever it is, do we think for one minute that we are going to do that to God in the future? Then what are you going to do when the day comes and God says you were wrong? Now you have to pay the price. What then? I'll tell you, I cannot conceive of more devastating words when, at that moment, Christ is going to say, "Depart from me, you workers of iniquity. I don't know you." There shall, indeed, be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Brethren, I may make lots of mistakes—indeed I do—but I'll tell you one thing: I want to hear and I want to change those things, because I look for that day when I can hear those words from Jesus Christ, "Well done, thou good and faithful

servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord." That I would rather hear, regardless of the cost today. And, really, when we finally get the attitude turned around, the other is an enjoyment anyway. There is never a satisfaction that goes with exploitation. None whatsoever.

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught [We were all taught. We were all instructed.], that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision.

You know, sometimes—exactly as it was historically—the most damning and troubling are those who believe themselves to be the most perfect, and that's exactly what happened back at this time. Here was the circumcision—letter of the law, right down the line. But they are the ones who would have thrown their brother into the lake. They never lived any of the cardinal, spiritual principles. What did Paul say?

"Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake"—some because they are the recipients of it (they are receiving), others because they don't want to have to pay their dues or fulfill their responsibilities. "Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses . . ." Now, pray tell, what is the reason for circulating letters, or going out, personally, condemning somebody else? Is it not to substantiate the self? Is it not to gain the adherence of somebody else—the willingness of that individual to drag somebody else right down into the lake of fire in order to substantiate his own defiance and rebellion? How many of us are willing to do that, knowing full well that if we are wrong, we are going to pay the price—a terrible price?

Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake [whichever direction that expectation may go]. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.

"[T]hat they may be sound in the faith." Whom? The ministry. Rebuke by the sermons, by teaching them. And, in certain specific areas, to make it known. And we have already told you the three areas in all of the Bible where we are specifically held responsible for exercising administrative duty. One is in blatant sin. And I don't mean the thoughts, or the expectations of somebody else—what somebody else thinks is sin—I mean what is absolutely sin. It is a known condition, and therefore, it must not be tolerated; or, in heresy; or, in the creation of confusion or division. In any of those circumstances, it must be handled, and as I have said so many times, the one most needing the correction, uniquely, is the one who is trying to get the ministry to correct someone else. Because he is creating a situation, and God holds him accountable.

"Not giving heed to Jewish fables . . ." Oh, remember where we started up here? "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught." Then, "not giving heed to Jewish fables." Well, now, what are the fables today? They were Jewish at that time, but they are *any* fables today. ". . . and commandments of men, that turn from the [T]ruth." What is the Truth? The Truth is that Way which God originally revealed, and if we do not accept that, let's admit that we are in total chaos and darkness.

"Unto the pure all things are pure." Now we are beginning to understand that here was a major conflict going on with regard to the Truth of God, and there were people arguing about it—people standing up and saying, "This is the Truth versus something else," not even recognizing that it is the duty of those that God holds accountable to preach the Truth. "Unto the pure all things are pure." I've said so many times that I do not mind if I, as a minister of God, am judged on what I preach, not on what I, in love and affection, tolerate for the moment. I don't want to be judged on the basis of tolerating things out of the hope that somebody else, who is not creating a problem, will finally come through. They are minding their own business, doing whatever they will to do. It's the other party who is making a problem out of it. In those cases, God says don't tolerate it.

Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure [I mean, they will take exception with everything that goes on]; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Read it, brethren, and understand. Oh, I have appealed; I have struggled; I have taught; hopefully I have put everything that I know how into it, in getting us to lay down our guns, to throw away our ammunition—our defiant spirits and attitudes—and to become tolerant, forbearing, and kind toward one another. I assure you, brethren, that if we have some volatile individual who comes in, and he attempts to take the floor—he is going to assert himself; he is going to begin to teach false doctrine—he *will* be dealt with. No question about it. But, in those areas where it is a matter of judgment, I want you to understand that it is not our time. It is not our responsibility. I do not know, and I cannot judge them, but I don't find it an anathema situation that if I exist in the same body with them, that it is going to taint me forever. It hasn't tainted me, whatsoever. I know what I believe; I know what I accept; I know that I believe and trust in God. Why do we have to feel, as the Pharisees did of old, that if they touched them, they were polluted forever? Yet, Christ went over there and sat down with publicans and sinners. But we can't do it. We are not going to do it. And we are just like some of them that want a perfect body today. The only thing is, it would be perfection as devised by the individual. It may not be God's perfection at all. That's our problem.

Alright, sometimes, brethren, our behavior makes us worse than an infidel—or an unbeliever. Now, do we really believe the Truth that has been taught? Then, why in the world can we not walk in the footsteps of Christ, who was already given God's Truth, who knew and understood, yet He sat with them? He didn't even condemn the adulteress, but just said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." But I'll tell you, we are not going to do that.

Now, when it comes our time, however—that is, when we have a unique problem in our lives—oh, we desperately want people to be kind and considerate toward us. Then, oh that's expected—that's necessary. But when it is necessary to manifest it toward somebody else, oh no. Oh no, that's outside of the realm; that's not acceptable.

Somehow, I guess we think we are condoning it. We have never come to understand that we are neither putting a stamp of approval on it, nor rejecting it. Can't you understand what a neutral position is? I don't know. If I knew—if I perfectly knew—I guess God would give me the responsibility of judging. But since He hasn't given me that knowledge, He has reserved it for Christ, who knows

and who is going to reveal all things, and who is going to bring the secrets into the open. *Then*, He is going to judge. Well, if there are secrets, then there are secrets that I don't understand. Otherwise, they would be known. And if I make a judgment, I am making it without knowing the material, or having that understanding. Any one of us cannot do it.

I tell you, brethren, there are many circumstances in life in which I have serious doubts, but those doubts I have kept to myself. I don't know, but it hasn't changed my view. Oh, I believe in the implicit Truth of God. You bet I do. It's just that I cannot know in those other cases. And in that case, I am not held accountable for it. If God hasn't given me the knowledge—the insight—I can't know. Then Christ is going to judge it in His own time, as a responsibility that God gave to Him. Brethren, if we can just understand that, then we can, ourselves, be faithful. Otherwise, God says that we are worse than unbelievers. We must act on the Truth that is given to us, and I mean a personal responsibility, not judging one another, not intervening in the lives of others and creating problems within this little fledgling body, or operation. Not at all. We can't make those determinations. We cannot know what is involved in that, but if we can just be faithful and obedient to that which God has given to us, then we can make it into God's Kingdom. And that's what he is talking about here in the book of Titus, because they had a whole conflict going on—a major conflict. And so he said, "Unto the pure all things are pure." They don't have a defiled conscience; they are not worrying about everybody and looking at them and saying, "Why, you dirty so-and-so. You bunch of sinners." Not at all. They are not concerned with that.

"[B]ut unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; [and] even their mind and conscience is defiled." I guess their conscience is defiled because, if they can't have it their way—whatever they have deemed necessary—they believe it has to be sin. And if they can't have it their way, then they want no part with them. And what they will do is walk out on the very Truth of God. They'll turn their backs, and I have never seen them fail to do it. And then they don't do anything, and that's a whole lot better, to them, than coexisting with somebody concerning whom they do not know the absolute truth and could not render a judgment on the basis of what's in God's Word, whatsoever—because the secrets are not revealed; there are unknown factors; we do not know. So they would rather turn against everything, than to admit there is a doubt here, and it is only going to be judged in the day of Christ. Well, I'll take the latter. I'm going to

be faithful to God—I'm going to hang on with everything that is within me, and then I will let God do the judging in the future.

But I know exactly what I'm going to accept in my life. There are a lot of people accepting a lot of things that I would not accept in my life. I wouldn't take a chance. Not at all. But, then, maybe they don't have the same level of faith that I do. Maybe they don't have the same determination. I don't know. I'll leave that up to God. And maybe when God looks down into my life, I tolerate things that are just as bad. If I knew it, I'd change it. But there some things that I just simply do not understand yet, and so I will have to work on it as the faith grows, and as the understanding increases.

Alright, point number 8: "Unbelievers and believers should not be yoked together by agreement or contract." Unbelievers and believers should not be yoked together by agreement or contract. That applies in the case of a marriage; in the case of business; or in the area of responsibility. It may be work, it may be duties. Whatever it may be, there should not be any yoking together in any responsibility of life, whatsoever. Why? Well, there are many, many reasons for it, but before we get into that, let's turn to 2 Corinthians the sixth chapter. 2 Corinthians 6, and let's begin in verse 14: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." That's an order. Do not become unequally yoked together with unbelievers. "[F]or what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" Now, what are we talking about? A believer is one who has accepted, in principle, the Truth of God. Now, all his or her personal actions may be somewhat different than those that you expect in your own personal life. You see, some people look at this and say, "If they don't do what I think they should do, it makes them an unbeliever." That is not what makes an unbeliever, brethren. Please don't put that kind of perverse interpretation on it.

An unbeliever is one who has not accepted the Way of Life revealed. That's it. Now, if somebody accepts it, and he tolerates within his life something that you would not tolerate, you must be tolerant. You *must* be tolerant. The judgment will take place in God's own time. An unbeliever is one who does not believe the revealed Truth of God. And he said, then, if you are a believer, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?"

Why Belial? Because he is the author of this world—all the systems and principles of this world; the concepts; the ways of life; the thought patterns; the beliefs; the arrogance of human minds. It's all after the principles of Satan himself.

. . . or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel [that is, an unbeliever]? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

One called of God is a recipient of the Spirit of God, and God is with him and abides within him through Christ. One who is not called of God—an unbeliever—does not have God. That's the reason God says you can't walk in that relationship. Unless there is agreement, can two walk together, as we find back in Amos? Why, of course not.

"Wherefore come out from among them . . ." God says if we have certain relationships, "come out from among them, and be ye separate." God requires that in our endeavors, where there is a binding relationship between individuals—marriage, business, responsibility, or anything of that nature—that we have no direct tie. That doesn't mean you can't work with them. You may be thrown into that kind of situation, whatever you do. But you do not have a tie that binds you, where you are struggling with one another. He is talking about being united. Can you imagine what kind of problem would be generated in a situation where there is one who specifically believes God, and is going to act on all the principles of God, and another one who does not believe in any of them, and both of them are strong in their convictions? What about the Holy Days? What about the Sabbath? What about clean and unclean foods? What about many of these things that are going to directly affect that relationship? Can you imagine what would happen in a marriage relationship? Well, that's why the Apostle Paul said, in 1 Corinthians, the seventh chapter, that anyone who is baptized in the Body of Christ, cannot marry one who is not. Yet, there are people who do it. Well, they just make mistakes. We all mistakes, it seems, every day, because somehow we believe that we can work it out. One who is brought up within a family—in a family relationship—in the church, should never marry outside. But they do, because once children grow up, they make up their own minds. Well, I'm not

nearly as concerned about what the children do, as I am with whether or not the parents support them. Well, I shouldn't use the word support, because, obviously we are not going to turn against our children, and I don't think God requires that. But, do we believe that it is acceptable? That's what I really mean. Or, have we done our level best to teach—to instruct—and to give them the basic understanding which is essential, or necessary?

So, what is it that God requires in this case, where He said unbelievers and believers should never be yoked together? Marriage is a very key area, and let me tell you, that is such a close relationship that if there is not harmony and agreement, you don't have a ghost of a chance. But, business is almost as bad, because business revolves around days, and it revolves around principles. Most businesses lie like it is going out of style. They believe they couldn't get by if they didn't lie. One of the first cardinal principles that a secretary is going to be taught is to lie. If you don't believe that, maybe you had better go and check it out. One of the first things they ask of a secretary, with regard to an executive, or whomever, is, "Will you lie for him?" Well, of course, a Christian can't lie. Now what are you going to do? So, business relationships can be very strained if there is not mutual agreement. And even in responsibilities in life there must be agreement. That's why, of course, one who has money should never become basically involved in a direct personal relationship—I'm not talking about a corporation or something of that nature—in which he becomes surety for somebody who lives outside of the Truth of God. Sometimes it's dangerous to do it for someone who is within. But can you imagine the potential problems outside? If you become surety for somebody and you have no confidence in that individual—you don't know anything about him—the noose may just drop around your neck. And are you ready and willing to accept that?

So, God says very clearly that there should be no such distinct ties with any of us. He said, do not enter into them. "Be ye not unequally yoked together." Do not become tied up in these things. Be of help, be of assistance in any way you can, with anyone—in the world, out of it, wherever they are. But don't become tied in mutual agreements where you are in bondage, or service, to one another. Marriage, business, or such other more broad, ramified responsibilities, can oftentimes be a nightmare unless you understand this principle and abide by it.

Alright, point number 9: "How do you conduct your social life before unbelievers?" One principle here, very quickly, in 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 27. 1 Corinthians 10 and let's note verse 27:

If any of them that believe not ["that believe not" is the negative of this word *apistos*] bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go [that is, it seems acceptable, and you want to go]; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

Does that mean turtle? Pork? Anything that's there? No, not at all. What's he talking about? You'll have to go back and get the introduction to this, and if you read it in context, you will find that we are talking about those things that were offered up as sacrifices, and so on, that were normally acceptable anyway, but because they were offered up, they were in doubt. Now, we know that it is not a problem with meat, no matter what they have done to it religiously, for example, if somebody might have sprinkled a little water on as a certain blessing—and you know what I mean by that. I don't worry about that because I'm not buying it for that purpose. Sometimes it's just better meat. But if my conscience were hurt because I am buying it on that very basis, then I would have to make some kind of a move. So, if you are disposed to go to one of these things, select your food wisely, and let your conscience be your guide, in that regard.

So he said, then, "If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake." If it's a matter of conscience in this case, it isn't a matter that you know what it is; it is something subject to doubt. Alright, if there was something subject to doubt, and I was disposed to go, and there was some reason for being there, I wouldn't carry on about it. I'd go ahead and partake of it and maybe I'd be a little more judicious next time and not get caught in it. But, certainly, I'm not going in, where I am invited into that set of circumstances, and say, "Okay, how did you cook it?" A situation where you insult the cook to the nth degree, and so on. I would not do it. That is a very, very poor practice. Be careful. But, brethren, if we are believers, let's be careful how we carry out our responsibilities in life. And, so, if an unbeliever does invite us, weigh it seriously. It is your duty, not theirs.

Next time, we'll continue in tape number 20.