

02 Hearers and Doers (side 2)

There are others who have them.

The others are not here.

I am.

Just think about that, because that's very fundamental.

And down a little further, chapter 2, verse 12, maintain good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in case they speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds.

Now, unfortunately, we have individuals who have come and gone who have not maintained such good conduct.

I like to hear when somebody who doesn't exhibit the state of conversion says, in wanting to terminate her or his relationship, in this case it was a woman, with her husband, I have nothing to accuse my husband of.

He's too good for me.

Now, please, ladies, do not ask me who the gentleman is.

You see, this is so much nicer than to discover that the pots were flying from one to the other in the kitchen.

I think too often we really need to reconsider the conduct of ourselves.

If we're really converted, we should not have to have this kind of problem.

He starts out, Peter does, servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect.

In verse 18, we have an employee-employer relationship.

Of that day, we could say employees in the work, be submissive to your bosses with all respect, not only to the kind and gentle, but also to the overbearing, and sometimes we have both, you know that? Because they're human beings, mostly this is not the case, but I think it is important.

Now if you are properly disciplined for something that you did wrong, and you take it patiently, what reward do you have is what he brings up in verse 20.

But if you do right and suffer, then of course you have God's approval.

Now what he's saying here should illustrate something important, because many, not by any means the largest percentage, but many who attend the Bible study, many who attend each of the three congregations, whether students or married people, are involved in working for each other, and we have to learn by this how to conduct ourselves.

It's easy to be overbearing, and we do know that some employers within the work, some managers have this problem, and some do not.

It's nice to know that when people leave your area that they speak well of you, just as when you have others leave your area, you can speak well of them.

Now if we adopt that kind of submissiveness to each other, we will resolve many of the hard feelings that can arise.

Now after discussing this relationship, Peter says in chapter 3, verse 1, likewise you wives, be submissive to your husband.

So there is a relationship between the servant and the master, the employee, the employer, that Peter immediately takes up with respect to women.

And here we have a growing problem that afflicts the church, where there is a tendency to adopt a policy that the family must not take precedence over one individual desires and goals in life.

That is, women want their own goals, men may want their own goals apart from the family, and the family ceases to be a higher institution than the function of either man or woman, which family should be able to achieve what the individual alone might not.

So one of the problems we discover in many those who have come and gone, or where there are still problems within families, is that women have yet to learn what it means to be submissive.

Now Paul, at another point, speaks of wives to be submissive to their husbands, husbands to love their wives, and later he said to submit to one another.

That is to be concerned for and to try to fill the needs and wishes of the other.

But the most critical matter is that women do have to learn to be submissive to their husbands.

This probably has not been the major message in marital relations for a number of years.

And there is a reason why we have a number of problems.

Or as one young lady in her teens said in my presence, that dad's idea was what would have made the problem work out, but mother had another idea.

And I have seen quite often that there are major problems with children when wives seek to counter what the husband wishes to have done. If you don't agree as wives with what your husbands have decided, you should try to reason and to understand why the decision was made and talk with them in private rather than to counter in public before the children.

It is unfortunate when a man believes that when he's away from home and wishes to have something done, it will not be done because the wife cannot be relied upon to do it.

Peter says that wives should be submissive even though the husband doesn't obey the word.

Now that's quite a statement. It doesn't say, likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands only if they obey the word.

It's talking about this kind of submissiveness even to the unconverted mate.

And then comes the story of the kind of attitude in verse four of a meek and quiet spirit.

Not a spirit that is constantly seeking to be asserted. Now I know that some women have more personality than others. We're not talking here about women who are unable to communicate.

We are talking about their state of mind as to whether their spirit is quiet or agitated.

I hope that clarifies or gives you a picture.

Likewise you husbands. Now let's look at what is often overlooked.

Live considerably with your wives. That's very nicely worded. If we had more men who lived considerably with their wives, we would not have the family stress.

And you will discover quite often that when men are inconsiderate, when women are not submissive, they're either suffering the consequences as individuals or this can affect their relationship to the church. When I find men who are not considerate, when I find women who are not submissive, I'm touching upon the causes that ultimately lead to individuals failing to fulfill their respective roles in marriage and defrauding one another.

These are the first steps. It is probable that when it says to wives to be submissive that the biggest problem women have is not being submissive.

It is equally probable therefore. It doesn't mean that you all fit equally in this characteristic, but this is a statement of a generality, that men's biggest problem is the lack of consideration for their wives. The man who comes home sits in front of the TV, you know the story, you have the picture, or you do it yourself. Have your beer, you wait for the meal, and then you go back and look at TV or the newspaper to give no consideration to what the woman needs who may have been working all day also. No attention. To live considerably is a very important responsibility to bestow honor on the woman as the weaker vessel.

Now this is an attitude Mr. Herbert Armstrong has always sought to bestow honor on his wife.

I think that was an example that he both spoke about and did, and I think that men need to adopt this more often than to examine how they conduct themselves, because what we are discovering here is that Christians who have been baptized, who have received the Spirit of God, can fall short in these areas. The degree that you consistently fall short is the degree to which you gradually separate between yourself and God. Or as one person said to me not so long ago, there came a time when the person that I knew and married was not the same person that I was now living with. The attitude of consideration or of submission was changed. There was no attitude of conversion when I talked to that particular mate. It was no different than someone who had never been converted, except now there was just simply no interest in truth, no interest in the work or the church. Finally, all of you have unity of spirit.

Didn't say unity of belief. Sometimes we read things in that are not there.

We really have to wait until the resurrection before that will be possible, because the things we believe are affected by so many sources that are divergent, that there is no way for us all to believe everything alike. Some are much older in the faith than others. Some have a rich experience in one area and not another. Some have more to unlearn in one area than another.

What we are asked to have is unity of spirit.

It is nice to have someone who is a brother or a sister in the church that you can talk to and even disagree with and share the same spirit in approaching the problem over which you may not agree. Or to put it another way, there are sometimes ministers in the church or educators in the church or laypeople in the church that I do not discuss things with because there is no unity of spirit. It is sometimes, even if I agree or they agree, there is no real feeling of comfort and compatibility.

Now, the overwhelming majority of the spirit is there, but I think every single person, and I know no small number of ministers would say what I am saying, that it is possible in some cases to talk to people about things you do not agree with and you find that after two minutes you can't talk any

further because the problem is not the subject, the problem is the spirit and the attitude. I have a friend who is not of this fellowship every Sabbath. I mentioned him the last time I was in a study here.

We can agree to disagree that there is a unity of spirit. He is not an elder in this fellowship, but he is a man who keeps the commandments, who would lay down his life for me and for every one of you, if he needed to, because that is the kind of person he is. I may not agree with certain of the things and we have talked about it, drinking alcoholic beverages or L and G White, who is accepted as a significant speaker in the particular fellowship in which he is, but I have met a man there who reflects what I think we have often overlooked, the need for having the unity of the spirit and sharing the spirit of God as it is reflected in our attitudes. He put it this way that all my friends are his friends.

We have too many who don't have that.

We are asked finally, verse 8, chapter 2, finally, all of you, here is where all the problems could be eradicated. If we have the unity of spirit and sympathy and love of the brethren, remember we already had that. That was explained before in verse 22, chapter 1, a tender heart and a humble mind.

We have individuals that we can't discuss things with even in our own fellowship because there is no humble mind, there is no tender heart. I don't know of a single marital problem that couldn't be solved if this verse were put into practice.

If we have sympathy for the differences, I have to have sympathy. Let's put it plainly so there is no misunderstanding since one of the big problems with a very large number of people, I don't know about the percentage, I'm glad I wasn't trained in the legal profession. I have sympathy for somebody who was because not everything in that profession is 100% in accordance with the Bible.

I have sympathy for people who were educated in the education of this world because not everything in that is 100% in accordance with the Bible.

Or to put it plainly, I have to have sympathy for everybody because your education and your experience 100% wasn't in accordance with the Bible and you are affected by it whether you know it or not. You may want to have your mind swept clean but there is no mind that doesn't somewhere have some crumbs of leather in a corner that still have to be swept out. And if we learn to have sympathy for those where these differences are, where limitations are, but the key starts in not having sympathy for error, for lies, propaganda for false ideas, but first of all the unity of the spirit where you share the same basic attitudes that reflect the character of God.

Then these other things come to play. We're told to love our enemies, we also love our brethren.

Loving our enemies doesn't mean we share the unity of the spirit with them.

Once we have that, then we have the capacity properly to handle sympathy, to be able to overlook somebody else's mistakes or to recognize that there may be legitimate differences in the way we do things. I do not know of any two parents who always do things the same way.

Mr. Armstrong probably wouldn't 100% do everything in handling legal matters, as our skilled legal staff is, but he has had to commission them too because he's not either trained or able to take time from other duties.

I wouldn't rear my children exactly as you would rear yours. Your children are probably grateful, so are mine. I have sympathy for them. Presumably you will have sympathy for mine, you see. These are

attitudes. Don't return evil for evil or reviling for reviling, which is why we discover many intimate personal problems occur. But on the contrary, bless for to this you have been called that you may obtain a blessing, and if you do, you ought to give one.

He who would love life and see good days should keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile. We read this, we sing this, let him turn away from evil and do right.

Let him seek peace and pursue it, not division, not trying to extract facts from the computer that would give a picture that the whole story would not convey. One of those unfortunate things that we don't follow, some of these very simple instructions. Dr. Meredith has been required by Mr. Armstrong and himself would view it in the same way that we deal with the problems that have risen in the church and the basis of the attitudes, not fundamentally on the basis of whether there may be differences here. We work with the differences. You cannot work with a different spirit. And of that command has come down from Christ through Mr. Armstrong, through the administration of the church. We should carry it out in the church, not merely in the ministry and in our own family relationships and in our employee-employer relationships. It is the attitude that determines these basic differences, which will reflect whether or not the individual stays in a converted frame of mind or ultimately disappears from the faith. Now, let us look briefly at one other verse in chapter 4. In verse 7, the end of all things is at hand. Peter was viewing it prematurely.

Jesus told him that he would when he said it wasn't given to you to know the times and the seasons.

He thought the Roman sword was bad enough. He hadn't heard of the atomic bomb.

And he judged things on the basis of the experience. And of course, for them, the end of all things was at hand because now they're all dead. As far as you're concerned, the end of all things for you is when you're dead, because you have finished this course. Then comes the resurrection.

So for some, it may be much nearer than the actual return of Christ whenever that may be.

We have some who die from month to month, year to year. We should live, at least in terms of love, that the end of all things for each one of us, personally, could be at hand.

Verse 8, after mentioning matters here of prayers and not in a good translation, I don't like the rest of the verse. Let me look at verse 8.

Now, if we hold unfailing our love for one another, those who have claimed to love the institution, those who have claimed to love those who are responsible at high levels in the institution would have been able to cover what they might have conceived as a multitude of sins.

I didn't say they were a multitude. I say what they might have conceived.

So let us now put it another way. To hold unfailing your love for one another since love discovers and reveals a multitude of sins is not what the scripture says.

We therefore say that if someone uncovers what he conceives to be a multitude of sins, which is the opposite of what this verse says, then he is not holding unfailing his love for another.

Now, let us note that this does not mean that you should not go to the person who has sin.

It does say that you don't go to third parties.

As I told one person who is no longer among us, I said if I had that kind of evidence that you claim to have seen and know, I would already have done one of two things. I would have gone to the party

involved and or taken another witness. And if I had to go to the highest level in the church, I would have gone there as the next intimate part of this step.

But I yet find no one who ever has heard or circulated stories who has ever taken evidence, which he didn't have, and gone to the party about which it was spoken.

Because if they had done that, the problems, if they existed, would have been solved.

And if there were no such problems, of course, you would have had no justification for going.

We must learn to distinguish also what we conceive to be sins from merely differences in administration, differences in handling matters, to recognize what is our responsibility and where our responsibility properly ends. If I know that somebody else is given a responsibility, I will back up that responsibility. It does not mean that I will copy every pattern of life of the person who is responsible. I think it is time we followed this procedure.

Jesus said it plainly. Remember when he said to the people in general, the scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves on Moses' seat, whatever they command you, that do. Because they were people who got back to the letter of the law. So the letter of the law was not the issue with them.

But don't do after their works because they say and do not.

Now, Jesus, who was God in the flesh, allowed the scribes and the Pharisees still to sit on Moses' seat. Would you think that, therefore, Christ could not be the Messiah because he let them stay in the church? It was the church he had called out from Egypt.

Would you have said, but look, if the scribes and Pharisees do that, how could you possibly leave them in these offices in your church? All Jesus did was to say certain things, then to take time on one occasion or twice, as it was, to cast out the money changers.

And he told the people to be responsible because, you see, he wasn't here called to make those changes.

The Father gave him a commission as to what he would say and what he would do, and the Father had not yet decided that the scribes and Pharisees had to be displaced.

That there are people in the church who think if someone who is in a position of authority, of a position of authority, is not doing it as they would wish that he must be immediately displaced. And to Herbert Armstrong, who won't do what they want to, ought to be also.

This is their attitude.

The most people have never really looked at all these scriptures.

God has his reasons for leaving some people where they are.

And maybe they're there for the good of the work, and not the evil. Maybe we need to realize that sometimes we haven't seen everything yet.

So before we decide that we must take action, we should first note whether God always took such hasty action. Or to look at the story through the Bible, the remarkable thing is how long God was patient with human beings and positions of responsibility. But when he decides to act, it happens suddenly, when there has to be a change.

And when there is no need of a change, God also can act very suddenly.

And within sometimes two days or less, people who have thought to usurped responsibility that wasn't theirs, making decisions that God has not himself made, have come and gone.

You might also read sections at the very end of 2 Peter 3. Let me finish now with one phrase here.

You therefore, verse 17, beloved, knowing this beforehand, which is explained in the letters about those who twist and offer scripture, beware lest you be carried away. So here is a converted mind that can be carried away with the error of lawlessness, with the error of lawless men, and lose your own stability.

And we need to be careful. We have here in Southern California a new congregation that has been formed by people who have followed the error of lawless men.

And this only in the last few days. The people who have lost their stability.

It can happen. So what we learn is that there are people who, all the way alone, start out as hearers and not doers. Some who start out as doers and then get into wrong habits and entertain wrong thoughts. And in the end, you have individuals who no longer have the stability they once had.

They are carried away with the error of men who are not subject to the law of God.

John describes the state of mind, and we won't take more time here in his letters. He tells us about many who started out among us, but were never really of us. Then Paul also describes those who were of us and who have made shipwreck. Now, if you want to know where you stand, you've heard about sin during the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and now what you should take note of, now that you've had sin defined, is the attitude with which you deal with the law of God and with which you deal with brethren. Whether you become accusative of others' faults, imagine others' faults, become offended because of others' faults through or imagined, and you go through the rest of James and Peter and John and Jude, which are very fundamental books on this subject, because it describes the state of the Church which follows the book of Acts, because in the original New Testament, these books followed Acts and they reflect the last part of the history of the Church, as the book of Acts reflects the first. And these books show us clearly the state of mind and the attitude of those who stay with it and the attitude and state of mind of those who've come and gone. I appreciate your attention and I hope that all of you who have any doubts as to where you stand will give some serious thought to this because there is no doubt that not all of you who will live the next year will be here in our midst at the same time and place.