

**Biblical Articles
By
Mario Velez**

Author:

**Mario R. Velez, Th.M.
P.O. Box 842192
Houston, TX 77284-2192
Email: ProfVelez@MarioVelez.Net**

*Please visit online for the latest Bible studies
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To lust or not to lust

On April 17, 2011 there was a report by khou.com in Houston about three individuals who were in custody as a result of a police chase in west Houston. Police said that the three suspects were in a stolen vehicle and drove away as they began to pull the vehicle over. Upon losing control of their vehicle and hitting another vehicle the suspects fled on foot but did get caught. Some of us might question why somebody would do such a senseless act. One answer to such a story would be the power of lust. Whether it was the lust for the vehicle itself or the money they would get for it, or even the lust for the simple thrill of just committing the act, it is still a lust.

Most of us would not commit such criminal behavior as the one in this story. Yet, there are other categories of lusts that may not fall under criminal behavior, but would still be a lust just the same. Most of us have a tendency to think of sexual, monetary or power lust when the subject of lust is in our discussions. Nevertheless, there are many other types of lusts that we may not even consider a lust at all and perfectly normal. Let us examine a verse of Scripture that teaches us about the subject of lust in the Epistle of James 4:1:

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? (KJV James 4:1)

The reference to “members” in this verse is to the cell structure of our body that has the contamination of our sinful nature. A lust is simply an illicit uncontrolled desire or passion for something. In addition to such lusts for sex, money and power, there are also such lusts as social lusts, a lust for approval, the lust to get revenge or a chemical lust. Happiness does not come to an individual regardless of whether he or she achieves a lust. A person who does not fulfill a lust simply creates frustration and intensifies the desires of that particular lust. When we fulfill a lust, on the other hand, it never brings that elusive happiness that we were expecting.

Happiness and contentment for the born-again believer in Jesus Christ only comes from a relationship with God and understanding all the grace provisions and grace policy that He has made available for each of us. The result of our maximization of God’s grace provisions will result in having spiritual self-esteem, a sense of destiny and an occupation with Jesus Christ.

One of the unfortunate functions of lust is an inferiority complex that causes an individual to live their life rationalizing, justifying and proving that they are superior to others. Such mentality is destructive to a person’s life because it keeps them off balance and living with a very active sin nature. It is ironic that people often consider such believers spiritually strong

believers because they are extremely legalistic, self-righteous and moral. By living a life of self-justification that includes the world of flattery only feeds our lust for approval. Only our attainment of spiritual self-esteem will resolve such lust problems.

Therefore, let us examine our desires daily to make sure that they do not have roots from the influence of our sin nature or else we will be asking the question, “To lust or not to lust.”

The Criminal Mind – Part 1

There was a report on click2Houston.com about a robbing incident in Houston involving four individuals. Investigators found out about these individuals because the suspects were bragging about the robbery on Facebook. The question that the average law-abiding citizen might ask would be why would these individuals rob a bank and brag about it?

Let us begin by examining one place in the Bible that teaches that criminal behavior is wrong in the Epistle of Ephesians 4:28:

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. (KJV Eph. 4:28)

That Paul was writing to the Ephesian believers shows us that a Christian can degenerate morally to the point of stealing. As a result, Paul teaches that a believer should work by doing something useful to the benefit of others. In sharp contrast, the thief takes from others for his own benefit, as the report above clearly shows.

Another illustration from this report is that the criminal mind has an immense ego, to the point of bragging about their criminal behavior. In addition, the preoccupation of the criminal mind is with self and is subjective, arrogant and immature. As a result, all the relationships in the life of a criminal will be superficial, self-centered and irresponsible as well. You see, a criminal has no allegiance to the institutions of marriage, family or government. Therefore, with such a mindset, actions that might seem senseless to a non-criminal are perfectly normal to the arrogant criminal.

Yet, are criminals that way because they come from a broken home or because of having a childhood of poverty? We will examine the credibility of some of these viewpoints in part 2 of this article, tune in for more!

The Criminal Mind – Part 2

Welcome back to continue our examination of the criminal mind. This article comes from a report on click2Houston.com about a Houston

bank robbery that took place on April 22, 2011. In part 1 is the question of why these criminals would rob a bank and brag about it on Facebook.

Also in part 1, we saw that the criminal mind not only has an ego problem, but is also arrogant and irresponsible. Yet, the next question we will address has to do with the root cause of someone becoming a criminal. Is a criminal a victim of a broken home or perhaps because they come from an impoverish upbringing? There are many people who come from broken homes or may have an upbringing in poverty. Yet, these same individuals do not grow up to be criminals; therefore, these are only excuses. A lot of criminals have had a stable upbringing where both parents lived together and reared them. These individuals still chose to become a criminal. The criminal mind has no social boundaries. Thus, you will have criminals from poor or wealthy upbringings, stable or unstable homes, as well as criminals from every racial group in life.

Another view of the criminal is that they are mentally ill and do not know the difference between right or wrong. The suspects in our featured news story had nothing wrong with their mental function. These individual's actions were, not only calculating, but deliberate. There are some criminals who know the law extremely well. In addition, the criminal mind is very cunning in fooling, not only psychiatrists, but the courts system as well. These individuals look forward to doing time in a psychiatric hospital and having an early release.

Therefore, the criminals in our story are products of their own human free will. These criminals willingly chose from their own free will to do what they did. Let us take a look at what the Bible teaches about our free will according to Epistle to the Galatians 6:7-8:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (KJV Gal. 6:7-8)

Our choices, whether they are good or bad, have natural consequences. Thus, our choices will always dictate if we sow the repercussions of sinful choices or not. The law of volitional responsibility in these verses teaches us that we must all take responsibility for our choices, there is no excuse.

In our next installment of this article we will learn the solution to overcome bad choices.

The Criminal Mind – Part 3

We now come to the final section of this article on the criminal mind. As we have examined in part 1 and part 2 of our article, it comes from

a story based on a bank robbery that took place in west Houston. After looking at the characteristics of the criminal mind, we will now focus on the solution to overcoming such a mindset.

In general, the basic problem of the criminal mind is that it has no proper orientation to the authority in life. This is the reason so many frustrated young people do not have any capacity for life and end up turning to criminal activity. These same young people use criminal activity as an outlet for their authority arrogance. Young people today are not receiving proper teaching, or reject that authority always begins in the home under their parents and extends to every facet of life. Teenage crime is a direct result of the rejection of parental authority, which then extends to every system of authority they will come under in adulthood. Criminality begins early in life and extends into the teenage years until criminal thinking becomes a way of life. As a result, the criminal mind is irresponsible, immature, and refuses to take responsibility for his or her decisions and motivations.

In sharp contrast, a law-abiding citizen is basically a responsible individual. A law-abiding person chooses to take responsibility for his or her own decisions and chooses not to infringe on the privacy, property, freedom, and rights of other individuals. A responsible individual always relates to some system of virtue whereby they fulfill honorably their responsibilities in every area of their lives. It is this virtue that creates self-esteem in relation to the laws that relate to God's divine establishments and a spiritual self-esteem when related to God's plan for our lives.

An unbeliever with a criminal mindset may have difficulty breaking from that mentality because of their locked-in sin nature inclinations. On the other hand, a born-again believer who is guilty of criminal activity has a higher power at their disposal.

The born-again criminal can break from his or her criminal mindset, but it will take more than just using the confession technique of 1 John 1:9, which states that, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (KJV). The criminal mindset took a long period of time to develop and it will require some time to reverse this negative thinking. The recovery process will require learning and applying a vast amount of biblical principles. Staying consistent in this recovery process will result in the thinking to change. This is the mental renovation that Paul is teaching in Romans 12:2:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (KJV Rom. 12:2)

The exhortation is clear on not conforming to the humanistic viewpoint of the world, including the naive psychological opinion that takes

responsibility of choice away from criminals. We are to renovate our minds consistently with accurate teaching of the Word of God so it reflects in every aspect of our lifestyle. This mental change is the key to reversing the negative trends of the criminal mind.

The complete occupation of the believer-criminal with self must change to an occupation with Jesus Christ. Their belief of superiority in self must change to a belief of superiority in the Lord. Eventually, the mindset of the believer-criminal will change when the former criminal begins to base their happiness in the Lord. The happiness of God that develops will slowly remove those criminal desires. This same process also works when it comes to drug addiction, alcoholism, and such.

Choices, Choices...and more Choices

The article for today features a story of two individuals in Houston that are facing charges of child abuse who claim involved a 'spirit' in the home. Such a story will no doubt cause most of us to conclude that this is simply an excuse for a despicable act. Yet, there may be some of us who may believe that maybe a 'spirit' was the cause of the abuse. Perhaps we can make a better conclusion if we knew that the female suspect in this case also said that she believed the injuries were a result of the child's older sibling hitting him. Another explanation for the abuse was that the injured child was clumsy and was prone to falling. Perhaps it would help us understand what happened by knowing that the male suspect failed a polygraph test and then did admit punching the child.

Considering these factors, is there any excuse for someone to give a child multiple bruises throughout their face, head, back, penis, stomach and legs, as well as internal injuries such as a non-functional kidney? Is there any excuse for someone not to report such abuse of a child to the proper authorities, as the female suspect is being accuse of doing? Were these two suspects victims of abuse themselves? Even if that was the case, it does not make these two individuals mindless people who cannot choose. The male suspect chose to give in to his anger and the female suspect chose to ignore the reality of his action, whether in the name of love or whatever reason. That both suspects chose to make excuses for their actions rather than take responsibility tells us that they knew their actions were wrong. The only person who did not have a choice in this story was the innocent child that suffered at the expense of the irresponsibility of these two suspects.

For anyone, including psychological experts, to say that these suspects did not have a choice in their actions is an insult to the victims of such behavior. We all make choices, whether we have been victims of abuse or not. We make choices every day about what we think, what we eat, how we dress, who we associate with and even to stay ignorant of what the Bible teaches.

All real power of thought is in God's Word. The more we master the doctrinal truth of the Bible, the more correct conclusions we will make. Mastering doctrinal truth will certainly take consistency and patience on our part, because we have to learn and apply our spiritual assets for ourselves. As in any subject, making sacrifices will be part of this process to be successful.

The Lord has given us all the freedom to make choices from our own free will and he holds us responsible for our decisions and actions. Generally speaking, human free will would have to be the most common cause of human suffering. Therefore, these suspects have no right to ask why God let this happen to them. They are products of their own bad choices (Col. 3:25).

But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. (KJV Col. 3:25)

Nobody who has reached the age of accountability is free from the law of volitional responsibility. The choices we make will always dictate the life that we will live, including those about eternity future. The Lord even gives us a choice to believe in the sacrificial work of Christ on the cross for salvation, or reject that work and be under condemnation. The choice we make about Christ will determine our eternal future (John 3:18).

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (KJV John 3:18)

If you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior you are free to do so now and avoid eternal condemnation. God never condemns anyone to eternal condemnation. Anyone who rejects the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross chooses for condemnation from their own free will choice.

Why do we get angry? – Part 1

Our article for today will examine why a Houston mother would get so angry to the point of burning her 10-year old daughter's face with an iron. What did her daughter do to warrant an iron to the face? Well, the young daughter was simply not reading words correctly in a book. Although not all of us may project our anger in such irrational extremes, we all do have a predisposition for anger from time to time.

Anger is a mental attitude sin and as such it can display itself in antagonism, hatred, frustration, bitterness or irrational behavior. It can also

be seen in such attitudes as gossiping, judging and maligning others, as well as in violence and murder. Our sinful human nature tempts us to be angry. You may notice that all these sin nature inclinations come naturally to us all. We do not have to take a class in school to learn how to be angry, to gossip, judge and malign others. No parent will ever have to say to their child, “Johnny, come here because I want to teach you some principles on how to be angry, jealous, disobedient and a liar.”

Though our sin nature is what motivates us to anger, we still choose to succumb to it or not from our free will. The Bible is consistent on exhorting us not to choose to follow our sin nature tendencies (Col 3:5-10).

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: (KJV Col 3:5-10)

The word “members” in verse 5 is a reference to the contamination of our sin nature. This contamination is genetically in our bodies. It is our sin nature that constantly wages war against our mind. Our mind is where we learn and retain God’s biblical principles so we can have them available to use to make good choices (Rom. 7:23).

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (KJV Rom. 7:23)

Therefore, God is never the author of sin or temptation. It is an arrogant mind that blames God for such factors as sin or temptation (James 1:13-15).

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (KJV 1:13-15)

As is obvious from our featured story, anger makes us commit some very irrational actions. Anger is the reason for so much embarrassing and dumb behavior. We should never try to solve any kind of problem in anger, but instead, should wait until we have calmed down and regained our senses. For the believer in Jesus Christ, the confession technique of 1 John 1:9 should be the first step in this recovery process continued by the application of biblical principles to our problem.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (KJV 1 John 1:9)

When we retaliate in anger against any person, we are simply trying to find satisfaction in that individual being unhappy from our retaliation. Our retaliation may be in the form of revenge through gossiping, maligning, or physical harm against the person. Getting revenge on someone should never be a basis for our satisfaction. We hinder God's divine punishment and justice to resolve the problem when we take revengeful actions through verbal sins or violence on our part.

Therefore, the question to consider now is that if anger is a sin, why is anger associated with God when the Bible speaks of the "anger" or "wrath" of the Lord? This is what we will examine in the second part of our article.

Why do we get angry? – Part 2

Welcome back to examine the second part of our article dealing with the subject of anger. Again, our article comes from a story of a Houston mother who got angry at her daughter for not reading words out of a book correctly. In frustration, the mother put an iron to the daughter's face and burned her.

In part 1 of our article we saw how anger is an emotional sin. We also saw the different ways it manifests itself in our lives. Yet, if this type of emotional anger is a sin, is it in the same class as the anger or wrath that the Bible links with the Lord? Obviously not since God does not sin. What then is the difference between sinful emotional anger and the anger of the Lord?

We will begin with the premise that God is infinite. We, on the other hand, are finite beings. Therefore, accommodations are in place to allow our limited minds to understand the infinite deity that God is. To do this the Bible at times ascribes to God human characteristics which God does not actually have and which are not a divine attribute. Take for instance, the characteristics of love and hate. When the Bible speaks about God loving and hating somebody, it is not referring these characteristics as attributes. Instead, such characteristics are what are known as anthropopathisms.

The Bible uses anthropopathisms to reveal and explain God's policy and attitude in humanistic terms that we can all understand from our own finite frame of reference. An anthropopathism would include such human characteristics as love, hate, anger, wrath etc. There will be either non-sinful anthropopathisms, such as love, compassion, or longsuffering and sinful anthropopathisms such as hatred, anger, vengeance, jealousy and such.

To interpret correctly the Word of God, we must understand the difference between love, as a divine attribute, and love as an anthropopathism. Love as a divine attribute is part of God's infinite being for all eternity past and future. God's attribute of love has always existed as a complete and perfect attribute for all eternity. Being perfect, God's love attribute means that he does not fall in love. Neither is God's love sustained by emotion, nor did it require an object to love. Thus, his love has been in existence in its completeness even before he created us.

Human love, on the other hand, requires an object to love. Emotions are also part of human love. Yet, God has given us emotions to appreciate certain things in life, but emotions in themselves are not love. Unfortunately, when our emotions are driven by our sin nature they reflect such sinful attitudes as hate, bitterness, malice, gossiping, judging and maligning.

We should never associate God's anthropopathism of hate with any of these negative emotional sins. God does not sin; thus, he does not hate at all. Although hatred is a sin, when the Bible ascribes to God hatred as an anthropopathism, it is only to express divine disapproval of an unbeliever in terms that we can understand.

Take for instance the anthropopathisms that the Bible uses when it states that God loves Jacob, but hates Esau (Rom. 9:13).

*As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.
(KJV Rom. 9:13)*

The anthropopathisms in this verse of love and hate teaches us that God's omniscience (all knowing) knew in eternity passed that Jacob would accept Christ as his savior and Esau would reject Christ as savior. By no means did God interfere with Jacob and Esau's free will to choose for or against Christ. The anthropopathism of love shows that as a result of his faith in Christ as savior, Jacob was acceptable to God. Jacob's adjustment to the justice of God was a result of him accepting Christ. In contrast, the anthropopathism of hate teaches that Esau's rejection of Christ did not allow the proper adjustment to God's justice. Therefore, Esau was not acceptable to God.

It is Christ's sacrificial work on the cross that provides the perfect righteousness that we all need to have a proper adjustment to God's Holiness. God's Holiness, made up of his perfect righteousness and justice demands that we have perfect righteousness to be in union with him for all eternity. God cannot be in union with our imperfect relative righteousness,

because to do so would mean he would become imperfect as we are. Thus, God provides a way for us to become as righteous as he is, and that way is through Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the love anthropopathism teaches that God accepts Jacob on the basis that Jacob would accept Christ. The hate anthropopathism, on the other hand, teaches that God rejects Esau on the basis that Esau would reject Christ. One was a believer in Christ and the other was an unbeliever in Christ. This is the basis of God's judgment of salvation to those who accept Christ and judgment of condemnation to those who reject Christ (John 3:16-18).

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (KJV John 3:16-18)

The same principle would apply about other anthropopathisms such as when the Bible speaks about the "wrath" of God (John 3:36).

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (KJV 3:36)

The "wrath" spoken about in this verse is a reference to condemnation to the Lake of Fire of the unbeliever who rejects Christ as savior. Let us be clear, whoever rejects Jesus Christ for their salvation does so willingly. The love of God never rejects any unbeliever. It is the unbeliever who rejects the love of God because God is longsuffering and does not want anyone to perish (2 Pet. 3:9).

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (KJV 2 Pet. 3:9)

In our next section of this article we will discuss emotions and if there is anger that we can exhibit that would not fall under a class of sin.

Why do we get angry? – Part 3

We now conclude the final section of our article on anger, based on a story about a Houston mother who burned the face of her daughter with an iron in anger. We have been examining in part 1 and part 2 of our article how anger is an emotional sin, and that emotional sin has no part in a perfect God. Let us now examine how there is an anger that we can exhibit that is not sin.

Although we have been studying the emotional anger that is a sin, there is also a righteous anger that we can exhibit that would not be sinful. The difference that we must understand is that righteous anger does not have negative emotion involved with it. Instead, it is having an understanding of a negative situation with a clear mindset. Non-sinful righteous exasperation is a response to an unfair situation. Yet, this mindset continues to concentrate on a relationship with God.

We can become righteously indignant when we clearly understand a particular wrong, and yet, have no appreciation for it whatsoever. A good example of having an indignation that is righteous was when Jesus Christ clears the Temple and then turns the tables of the money changer (John 2:13-25). He also reflected a righteous indignation when he chastises and calls the Scribes and Pharisees blind, foolish and hypocrites (Mt. 23:13-36). Yet, in spite of these false proselytizers, the Lord gave his life in love as a ransom for them as well (1 Tim. 2:6).

*Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.
(KJV 1 Tim. 2:6)*

The condemnation from the Lord to these false teachers was because they were teaching their self-righteous system of legalism to the multitude. The Lord had a clear awareness that this type of counterfeit teaching undermines accurate doctrinal teaching in the soul of believers. Also, there was no emotional sin associated with the Lord's righteous indignation. Since the Lord in his humanity was impeccable, he only reflected good emotion.

Good emotion will include such attitudes as having tolerance toward a particular individual or enduring some type of injustice or adversity. A reflection of good emotion is handling provocation or annoyance from someone as well as pain without complaining. In reflecting good emotion you simply maintain your composure without losing your temper or being irrational. A criterion for consistency in reflecting good emotion is to advance through the stages of our spiritual life. Our understanding of God's system of virtue for the church age believer is of utmost importance for good emotion to exist. Paul teaches that emotion does

not sway virtue-love. Virtue-love is not an emotion but a system of thinking. Our emotions can appreciate virtue-love thinking, but is not in itself virtue-love (1 Co. 13:4-7).

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. (KJV 1 Co. 13:4-7)

The normal function of emotion is to respond to the norms and standards that we have built in our frame of reference of our mind. Although emotion, by divine design, responds to the norms and standards of our thinking, they can function without thought, although improperly. Emotion without thought is going against divine design and is abnormal emotional activity. This type of abnormal activity is very unstable and is driven by our sin nature.

We must differentiate between normal emotion functioning as a good responder to the ideals of life and the sin nature function of our emotions when they react to life. God gave us emotion as a way to enrich our appreciation for what is proper and respectable in life. Yet, when our emotions go against God's design they, in turn, react to produce such things as sin and works driven by our sinful nature.

To maintain our stability in life will require not allowing emotions to be the criteria by which we live our life. Our emotion should always be under the directives of our intellect. Emotion without the command of the intellect cannot reason nor do they have any common sense. Living by emotion is the cause of so many bad decisions, especially in the area of romance and marriage. Emotional living is the source for much of the failure in the lives of believers today. Most don't have a clue of what makes up the spiritual life for the Church Age, much less how to apply it. Such believers, whether in ignorance or cognizance, end up making their emotion their god and are enemies of the cross (Phil. 3:18-19).

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." (KJV Phil. 3:18-19).

The Epistle of James also deals with the problem of believers preoccupying themselves with earthly things (James 4:4).

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. (KJV James 4:4)

Therefore, in our present Church Age, God's plan for our life does not include going on what we feel, but on what we know from Scripture. Emotions should never be an acceptable standard for our motivation, nor our thinking and actions. Emotion without proper thinking will hinder our advancement in our spiritual life and hinder the development of capacity within us for life, love and true happiness.

What does a child molester look like, anyway? - Part 1

There is a story on click2houston.com about an 18-year-old former Cinco Ranch High School football player and former camp counselor. He is facing charges of sexually assaulting an elementary school child. The story has a quote from the police chief where he states that the 18-year old was, "a nice-looking young man" and that he did not "look threatening at all."

With this in mind, let us consider that the Bible teaches that such actions would derive from what it calls "the flesh" or sinful nature (Gal. 5:19). Since the Bible also teaches that we all have this sinful nature, it would mean that we cannot confine such actions to individuals that do not "look threatening at all."

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, (KJV Gal. 5:19)

The Bible uses the word *adultery* to refer to married persons having sexual relations with someone other than his or her spouse. In addition, *fornication* would refer to unmarried individuals practicing sexual activities. Notice that the Bible places *adultery* and *fornication* in the same group as *uncleanness* and *lasciviousness*. *Uncleanness* is a reference to moral uncleanness and *lasciviousness* is basically referring to perversion in general. All of these activities are sin before the Lord and can eventually build one upon the other to greater degrees.

In reflecting on our story, we cannot limit a child molester to being a certain type of individual. He is not an older unshaven male who has a patch over his eye and a wooden peg leg, and runs around in his underwear with a knife between his teeth and a neon sign over his forehead that flashes the words, "I molest children." Someone who chooses to molest can be male or female, nice-looking or not so nice-looking. They can be thin or heavy, short or tall. They can be from any nationality and in any part of the world. Where ever there are people, there will be sin natures.

There are certain rules that the Lord has put in place for us all to function properly as human beings. One rule that God has given us to function under is that we should not practice sex outside the institution of marriage. God's design is, not only for the believer, but for the unbeliever as well.

The question that many of us might ask would be, "Why would God want to prevent us from expressing the very sexual function that he has given us as human beings?" Yes, the Lord has created our sexual function in us all, but he made it to operate inside the walls of marriage only. You see, marriage is to be held in high honor because it is a reflection of Christ and his Church (Heb. 13:4).

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. (KJV Heb. 13:4)

Those who do not understand the principle of keeping marriage in high honor and the marriage "*bed undefiled*," will always find some reason to justify sexual intimacy outside of marriage. Yet, they never realize how detrimental such actions can be to their lives. The type of activity that the young man in our story has allegedly done is one of the results of being sexually active outside of marriage (premarital sex). The psychological deviancies that such activity can create in an individual are numerous.

Of course, knowing not to practice premarital sex of any sort is one thing, understanding why we should not do it is yet another. Your average individual would probably state that the results of premarital sex are pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases. Therefore, if you can avoid pregnancy or sexual diseases, then it is all right to continue in it, right? As a result, the avoidance of pregnancy or sexual disease is done by using condoms. Yet, the root cause of the problem is still occurring, among believers and unbelievers, which is sex out of the marriage union. Premarital sexual activity will corrupt our thinking and ability to function properly as human beings. Avoiding pregnancy and sexual diseases is only dealing with symptoms and not the real problem, premarital sexual activity.

In the next section of this article we will examine the breakdown of the process of premarital sexual activity, and the myriad of detrimental results that come with it.

What does a child molester look like, anyway? - Part 2

Welcome to the second section of this article taken from a story on click2houston.com. The story has to do with a former Cinco Ranch football player that is facing sexual assault charges of an elementary school child. This story has the police chief stating that this 18-year old was, "a nice-looking young man" and that he did not "look threatening at all." Yet, we have seen that someone guilty of such actions does not fall into a particular gender, age, social status, physical makeup or race.

Our society tends to classify some sexual activity better than other sexual activity; however the Bible places all sexual activity outside of marriage in the same class. Whether it is fornication, adultery, or such perversions as that in our story, all are contrary to God's design for marriage and are sin, according to the Bible. God is the designer of sex, but has clearly designed it for marriage only. (Gal. 5:19).

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, (KJV Gal. 5:19)

Having seen how such behavior as that in our story is one of many deviant actions, let us examine the process of why this happens.

One of the dangers of sex outside of marriage is that it creates the arrogant tendency of self-gratification. This causes such an individual to desire the sexual sensation rather than a sex partner in marriage. As a result, the basis of ones values are on nothing more than fulfilling that sensation that one desires. Therefore, generally speaking men and women enter premarital sex to satisfy their sexual urge or desire. There is no genuine love or a sense of responsibility for their sex partner as they seek to fulfill their sexual desires. Although, this is especially true with men, women who respond to the sexual advancements of such men are responsible for such a decision as well. As a result, such women end up in a state of frustration, not only in single status, but also when they go into the marriage union. Neither of such individuals can be successful in marriage since neither understands the basis of genuine love, but instead go on emotions.

Promiscuity leads to the emotions taking control and giving us a false sense of love. Emotions in themselves are not love at all, but simply appreciators of love when love has been given a chance to develop. Unfortunately, becoming sexually active outside of marriage hinders love from ever developing and causes us to go on that feeling of emotion that is often mistaken as genuine love. True love develops in the soul and is where compatibility begins. We should never allow our emotions to dictate our decisions in life because emotions are irrational and have no common sense. God's design of the emotions is always to be subordinate to correct virtuous

thinking. Emotions minus right thinking are the reason many women get involved with irresponsible and abusing men, in spite of warnings from their friends and family, not to do so. Who hasn't looked back at a past relationship and thought, "What was I thinking getting involved with that person?" The simple answer is that it was not genuine love at all but emotions. The very emotions that allow us to appreciate the beauty of nature or give us goose bumps while listening to certain music can also lead us to think we are in love. Yet, these things do not mean we are in love.

The principle to remember is that a virtuous man will never take a female past her volition in the realm of intimacy. Likewise, a virtuous woman will not respond to the sexual advances of a man who does not have the integrity to respect her in this area. A virtuous man or woman will understand the value of emphasizing the soul and allowing love to develop first. A man or woman who lacks virtue will move on to find someone who emphasizes the body so as to fulfill their sexual gratification in the name of false emotional love.

False love that lacks virtue always emphasizes the body over the soul, as is so prevalent today. People without virtue emphasize sex over genuine love. Living by the emotions will always lead us to choose sin over virtue. There is never true genuine love in a marriage unless there is a unification of the soul first. When we go against God's design we only harm our self and this is the reason the Bible exhorts us to flee premarital sexual activity (1Cor. 6:18).

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. (KJV 1 Cor. 6:18)

The word "flee" in this verse is a translation from the Greek verb *pheugo* and is a reference to having a habit of fleeing without delay. This verb is in the active voice and signifies that we as the subject are the doer or performer of the act of fleeing. The Lord holds us responsible for not involving ourselves in sexual activity outside the marriage bond.

Premarital control of our sexuality results in the elimination of the handicaps that are created by premarital sexual activity. Premarital chastity produces self-control and avoids the undisciplined sexuality that hinders an effective sexual relationship in marriage, especially on the part of the man.

We will finish the third section of our article by examining the rest of the many forms of sexual arrogance that are hindering so many today and causing the divorce rate to continue to rise at an alarming rate.

What does a child molester look like, anyway? - Part 3

This is the third and final part of our article that is taken from the story of a former Cinco Ranch football player that is facing sexual assault charges of an elementary school child. We have been examining in Part 1 how such behavior as the one in our story can be done by anyone including "a nice-looking young man" that "does not appear to be threatening," as stated by the police chief in our story.

In Part 2 of our article we have seen how such behavior begins with going against God's design for sexual intimacy. God's design for sexual intimacy is for the marriage union only and marriage is to be in a place of high honor (KJV Heb. 13:4).

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. (KJV Heb. 13:4)

We keep marriage honorable by respecting that sexual intimacy is for a husband with his wife in the marriage union only. Although, our society may promote lifestyles of casual sex, multiple sex partners and cohabitation with one another before marriage, God's marriage design has not changed for today. The same design that God set in place in the first marriage between Adam and Eve is still for our present age as well.

Going against God's design will ultimately create instability in the institution of marriage and family. It should not be surprising that we have so many dysfunctional marriages and families in our present generation.

Developing a tendency for sexual self-gratification will cascade into various problems in an individual. When the foundation of one's values is fulfilling their sexual urges, then obtaining that sensation will therefore dictate their decisions. Of course, when the sexual sensation ceases to exist, such an individual may seek a comparable stimulation in chemical dependency. Seeking satisfaction in sensation only creates frustration in an individual because it never brings that perpetual satisfaction that they are seeking. As a result, their quest to fulfill that sensual satisfaction continues in alcohol, drugs, and even the ultimate form of escapism, seen in depression and then suicide.

17) This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18) Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19) Who being

past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. (KJV Eph. 4:17-19)

The word ‘greediness’ in verse 19 has a reference to an insatiable lust or an intense and frantic search for happiness. The basis for true happiness is a mindset of virtue, never on sensation; otherwise the quest for that happiness will never end.

The inner misery that triggers this overt stimulation can manifest itself in several forms. Not only is this manifestation seen in the form of adultery and fornication, but also in ‘uncleanness’ and ‘lasciviousness’ (KJV Gal. 5:19).

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, (KJV Gal. 5:19)

As we have seen in part 1 of our article, the word *uncleanness* in this verse is a reference to moral uncleanness and the word *lasciviousness* is referring to perversion in general. Therefore, other forms of manifestations of sexual arrogance would include such sins of degeneracy as homosexuality, bestiality and necrophilia. In addition, there are sexual sins of criminality that would include rape, incest, pederasty, prostitution and pandering. All of these sins are a perversion of God’s design for sexual intimacy.

In conclusion, we have now had a sobering glimpse of the detrimental results of living against God’s design when it comes to sexual intimacy.

God’s design is that sexual intimacy in marriage unites the bodies of the husband and the wife, however only personal love on the basis of integrity can unite their souls in true love. There is never true love in marriage unless there is a coalescing of the souls first. Therefore, we can live by virtue and in time it will get better. Yet, we can choose the alternative, to live by sensation and, as we have seen in our study, this is a guarantee that it will get worse.

Studies from Proverbs

Improper sexual relations

The book of Proverbs is a composition of good and bad thoughts, motives, decisions and actions in life. It teaches you to live without learning the hard way and no person in his or her sound mind likes learning the hard way. Learning the hard way is learning from mistakes and suffering, learning from the consequences of making bad decisions. The book of Proverbs has guidelines to avoid the pitfalls of life, and there certainly are going to be pitfalls in life. Proverbs has sentences of ethical wisdom and we can see examples of this from the very beginning of the book:

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity (fairness). (KJV Pro. 1:1-3)

According to verse 2 and 3 the purpose of this book is to gain wisdom through instruction. The book is a manual on wisdom, which is something that many are looking for today. The shelves in stores are loaded with self-help books on child rearing, finding purpose in life, and dealing with depression, to overcoming relationship problems. However, the Bible gives the solution to all the problems that we will encounter in life. Let's continue reading the next two verses in the first chapter of Proverbs.

To give subtlety (good sense) to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion (judgment). A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: (KJV Pro. 1:4-5)

Verse 4 and 5 state that the book is to teach foresight by increasing learning and understanding and that a wise man will hear. The contrast to a wise man that hears is a fool who does not listen. The word "simple" in verse 4 denotes someone who is inexperienced. In other words, to a young person who lacks life experiences, which age is suppose to give to an individual. Because of the lack of life experiences, Proverbs lets us know that young people, who lack these life experiences, will be gullible and easily influenced (*Proverbs 14:15*):

The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going. (KJV Pro. 14:15)

According to this verse only the simple and foolish believe everything they hear. The prudent or wise, on the other hand, looks at the risks and the rewards before making choices.

Although we might not be conscious of this fact, there are certainly a lot of things that influence us today. The influences in a person's life would come from such things as music, movies, television, the Internet, friends, family, books and even educators. In life there will always be truth and error, however the wise man will confirm all things. It is in these times that knowing what the Bible teaches comes in handy, which is the source of all ultimate truth, the only reality that really counts. This is why *Proverbs* 2:6 states that the Lord gives wisdom. To look anywhere else for wisdom would be foolish and futile. Yet, so many look to the wrong sources for answers to the problems we encounter in our lives. One area that causes problems in a person's life, especially with young people today, is in the area of sexual relations. The problems are based in not understanding the difference in what is proper and improper when it comes to sexual relations. Let's take a look at the difference between the two and what the Bible teaches in the area of sexual relations beginning with *Proverbs* 5:20.

And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished (captivated) with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? (KJV Pro. 5:20)

A strange woman here is a reference to any woman that you have not married! Not being married to her means that you do not have the right to touch her, and according to the Bible, this would constitute an inappropriate sexual relation. In contrast to this, let's take a look at what constitutes a proper sexual relation according to *Proverbs* 5:18.

Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. (KJV Pro. 5:18)

The "fountain" is a reference to the sexual energy of a man with a woman in the marriage relationship. We see that this sexual intimacy is limited to marriage, which has always been God's intention. Thus, proper sexual relations are for the marriage relationship only! According to God's Word, it is inappropriate outside of the marriage union and this is the reason that Hebrews teaches us that marriage should hold a place of honor and the marriage bed should be undefiled (*Heb. 13:4*).

Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. (KJV Heb. 13:4)

Yet, why does our present generation promote lifestyles of casual sex, multiple partners, and living together as the norm? Is God's design not for today? That is what is said when what the Bible teaches about proper sexual relations is brought up. This is the arrogant mindset that doesn't even realize that when we go against God's design by getting involved in an improper sexual relation we only damage ourselves. How do you damage yourself when you get involved in improper sexual relations?

To begin with we have to realize that promiscuity destroys your discernment skills and causes love to be based on emotions and visual attraction. I know that many connect love with an emotional feeling, but emotions are not love in itself. We can certainly get emotional watching a good movie, hearing a classic song and even watching some major sport event that keeps you on the edge of your seat. By no means does this mean you are in love. Your emotions are simply appreciating these things, and nothing more. Yet, when we base our values on sensation, as in the area of male and female relationships, you will seek gratification in the area of sex. This will eventually carry over into the area of drugs and excessive alcohol, which is nothing more than stimulation and not true happiness.

Premarital sex also causes difficulty adjusting to one person in marriage. God's design is the emphasis of the soul, which is where the real person resides and is what makes us different than animals. Emphasizing the body before marriage will prevent you from ever entering the compatibility and relationship stage of romance. When society as a whole emphasizes the body over the soul there will eventually be a rise in divorce, drug abuse, alcoholism, depression and suicide.

Therefore, premarital sex handicaps you from ever being the right person for marriage. Choosing against God's design will limit you from ever becoming the right person for marriage because of the lack of understanding of what constitutes genuine love, which is not based on sensation! Genuine love is always based on virtue, which is that moral excellence that develops by loving the Lord and living according to His design. Going against His design is detrimental only to us since we are products of the decisions that we make and our decisions will always have consequences, whether good or bad. We tend to think in our present day that by violating God's design we will somehow escape those negative consequences that come with those bad decisions. In our arrogant thinking we fool ourselves into thinking that what has happened to others will never happen to us! Yet we can never neutralize the terrible effects of bad decisions.

In conclusion, as we have seen from Scripture, a sexual relation is only appropriate within the bounds of the marriage union. Deciding to live by God's design is imperative, regardless of what the majority may say or do. We can live by God's design and develop the capacity to be successful in life, love and truly have happiness based on virtue, or we can live on sensation and be miserable and frustrated in life, love and unhappiness,

constantly going from one self-help book to another. The choice will always be ours to make.

Proper and Improper fear

The Book of Proverbs deals with the subject of proper and improper fear. Let us begin by looking at the verses in Proverbs that bring out the subject of fear and make the distinction between what is proper and improper fear.

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe. (KJV Pro. 29:25)

We see here that having fear of man can become a snare or a trap, in the sense that your actions are controlled by the person whom you fear. But what does this mean? Well, do you worry about what others think of you? You can be afraid of being rejected. This fear can cause you to do anything to gain the approval of those whom you want to be accepted by, such as in the case of peer pressure. Peers would constitute your equals in your same age group or social position.

When you are young you feel the pressure to keep your standing in your peer group. You worry about their approval or disapproval, and in turn, this alters your beliefs and your actions. You may feel pressure to dress a certain way or talk and act a certain way. The desire to do anything to gain the approval of your peers will influence your decisions. Yet, this type of mindset is a trap that will cause you to compromise the truth of the Bible and instead of measuring your life by what Scripture teaches you are concerned by the popular opinion of the day. It is when we are young during the formative years that we are the most vulnerable to this entrapment. Therefore, this is a good time to recognize the pitfall of peer-pressure and avoid it.

It is through the influence of peer-pressure that individuals with real or imagined problems end up getting involved in such things as cliques. A clique is an abnormal emotional dependence on a group, as in the case of gangs. In gangs you always have the leaders who are trying to control those who are following. The leader's lust for control and the followers lust for approval. This is not friendship at all! True friendship never involves being controlling or being co-dependent. True friends do not do this and it is the trap of the foolish, but what is the alternative?

Instead, Proverbs 29:25 tells us to put our trust in the Lord so we can see a fool for who they truly are. The foolish are exposed by their foolish talk, they are rebellious, promiscuous and their influence is to be avoided. The wise will reject the fool, yet the foolish will get entangled in this web of deception, it will always be a choice. The wise understand that the way of

the fool has negative consequences, which would include such things as failure in their relationships, addiction to drugs and alcohol, depression to being anti-authority. The final destiny of such a continued lifestyle of the foolish could potentially end up in jail or death. These negative consequences create a dysfunctional individual and there is nothing cool about such a lifestyle. All of these negative actions and consequences are part of the life of a fool according to the Bible. Although this is prevalent in our present age, there will always be those few who choose to live wisely. This will all depend on our freewill to make the right choice.

The wise are not concerned about pleasing the foolish but are concerned about doing things the right way. This is what is considered living a life of integrity. The wise are concerned about pleasing and trusting in the Lord, which is considered proper fear according to Proverbs 24:19-21.

Fret (anger) not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked; For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out. My son, fear thou the Lord and the King: and meddle not with them that are given to change: (KJV Pro. 24:19-21)

Therefore, according to verse 20 the wicked shall be snuffed out, like the flame of a candle. Solomon is teaching his son to fear the Lord and this is always the beginning of wisdom. So, in verse 21 we see that the ultimate fear that is proper is the fear for the Lord, which is simply a reference to having reverence or respect for the Lord that manifests itself in obedience. When you have respect for what the Bible teaches, you have respect for the Lord because these are His words, His thoughts and principles. We are commanded to live by them because it is to our benefit and when we reject them we only damage ourselves.

Apart from God's revelation that is found in the pages of Scriptures we are basically ignorant and confused. We will be confused about knowing where we came from, where we are going, who we are, why we exist, let alone what we should be doing. Yet in our arrogance we think we know it all. This is prideful arrogance!

No human being can claim to know all the secrets of the universe. Yet, many would give everything to know all these secrets. The God of the Bible knows all the secrets of the universe and has the unlimited power to sustain the entire universe. He sustains the stars and even our heartbeat and He alone determines the time of our death. We would do well to have a respectful fear for the Lord, who can, not only destroy the body but the soul as well. This is proper fear.

Proverbs 24:21 also brings out the fact that we are to fear the king, which is a reference to civil government. Government would include such things as law enforcement and the court system of our civil government.

Thus, we see that the Lord and civil government are to be feared because they are the means of executing punishment. Government is God's representative on earth to execute punishment to the rebellious (Rom. 13:1-4).

Let every soul be subject unto the higher power. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not terrors to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. (KJV Romans 13:1-4)

We see from these verses that the governing authorities are a terror to those who do wrong. The job of these authorities is to enforce the law by punishing criminals either through incarceration or execution. The reference about bearing the sword by these authorities teaches the principle of capital punishment. The principle for capital punishment is also taught in *Genesis 9:6* and commands that if someone murders anybody they are to be executed. Therefore, capital punishment is Biblical, not only in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament, as we have seen in *Romans 13:4*, and this is how the victims of these crimes are honored (Pro. 28:17; Ex. 21:14).

Criminals have an arrogant mind that wants their own freedom, rights, property and life respected by others around them. Yet, they themselves are not considerate of giving the same respect to others in these areas. For individuals with such a mindset, there is an enforced humility that is designed to come from the governing authorities or the Lord Himself and, as we have seen from Proverbs 24:20, their flame of arrogance will be snuffed out as quickly as the flame of a candle!

The responsibility of the governing authorities of any nation are to protect the freedom, rights, property, and life of all individuals in that nation since criminals do not respect the freedom, property, rights and privacy of others. To maintain the stability of any society, it is imperative that the governing authorities impose punishment on those who are involved in criminal behavior through a proper system of jurisprudence, which allows for freedom while enforcing order. Jurisprudence is simply the science of law. Without the deterrent of punishment, the criminal element in any society will increase and threaten the stability for those who are law-abiding. Thus, the governing authorities have been ordained by the Lord to provide the fear of punishment to those who threaten the stability and safety of the citizens that it governs.

Therefore, the improper fear of peer pressure should be avoided, and we would do well to have the proper fear for the Lord and His ordained governing authorities. The negative effects of improper fear and the positive effects of proper fear will determine whether we live an unstable and frustrated life of the fool or instead a stable well-adjust life of the wise.

Anger and Rule of the Spirit

How many of us have ever been angry? What made us angry? Where does anger come from? Let us try to answer these questions by beginning our study from Proverbs 15:18.

A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife. (KJV Pro. 15:18)

The word “wrathful” has a reference to burning anger, fury or rage. We have all experienced anger at one time or another in our lives. For some people anger is a regular practice that moves them to be ready to fight at the drop of a hat. The Bible teaches us that this combative spirit is from our depraved sinful nature that we inherited from Adam (Titus 3:3; Rom 1:29-31; 3:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:22). Not only does our sin nature produce anger, but also hatred, jealousy, slandering to having revengeful motivations. We can all certainly relate to these negative tendencies since they all come to us naturally. We do not have to be taught to be angry or vengeful; it comes naturally for all human beings. These tendencies are based on some form of prideful arrogance or another.

Our sin nature is based in conceitful pride and self-centeredness and demands to dominate others (Pro. 13:10; Phil 2:3-4). A reactive quick-tempered anger is an impulsive mental attitude that tries to impose control over others and damage their reputation. This impulsive spirit of anger desires vengeance for any offence or wrong it feels it has suffered and the Epistle of James teaches us its source (James 4:1-5)

From whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? (KJV Jas. 4:1)

When Adam sinned he acquired a sinful depraved nature and he has passed it on to all humanity since his fall. The sin nature has continued to be transmitted genetically by the male through procreation (Gen. 5:3). In Genesis 5:3 when it states the Adam “begat a son in his own likeness after his own image,” it is referring to Adam’s descendants being born in Adam’s likeness after the fall. As a result, we now all have the contamination of the

sin nature residing in our cell structure of our body. This explains why it is so easy to be angry, hateful or jealous; it is in our “members.”

Therefore, the wrathful man of Proverbs 15:18 is an individual who gets angry at the slightest provocation. Of course, a wrathful man’s anger only inflames the person who offended him in return, and as the saying goes, the fight is on in the form of a major conflict. Thus, the wrathful man causes strife everywhere he goes because of his reactive impulsive anger.

Our sin nature will cause us to react to the most insignificant things such as someone cutting in front of us in traffic to them shining their car’s high beams at us. Unfortunately, when children are allowed by parents to have these negative impulsive tendencies of their sin nature to continue, they only become stronger and the child goes into their adult lives with these flaws. This is the reason that God’s Word mandates parents not to spare the rod of discipline to a child and to do so is a lack of love (Proverbs 13:24). A parent who truly loves their child does not overlook their faults but takes steps to correct them!

Therefore, in contrast to the wrathful man, a man that is slow to anger defuses negative feelings and ends confrontations. Such a man overlooks offences of antagonists and disperses away any rage instead of impulsively reacting in hostility. What could have escalated into a violent irruption is quickly appeased into a civilized and peaceful resolution. We have to see it for what it is and choose not to follow these reactive impulses.

An angry man is foolish because his emotional outbursts disregard wisdom and common sense (Pro. 14:17,29; Eccl 7:8-9). Such individuals should be avoided because, not only can they be dangerous, but will corrupt a virtuous spirit of the wise who hate fighting (Pro. 17:14,19; 19:19; 29:22; 14:7; 22:24-25; I Cor 15:33).

“He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.” (KJV Pro. 14:17)

“He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.” (KJV Pro. 14:29)

The one thing that has to be learned by the wise man is to maintain a rule over their spirit by avoiding anger (Pro. 14:29; Jas 1:19-20). As a matter of fact, Proverbs 16:32 tells us that a man who can maintain a rule of his spirit is greater than a warrior who can defeat a city single-handedly!

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. (KJV Pro.16:32)

The word “mighty” in Proverbs 16:32 has a reference to a mighty warrior and “ruleth his spirit” connotes having command of the emotions. In

other words, mastering our anger is a greater accomplishment than a mighty warrior who masters a city. The greatest victory anybody can obtain is that of conquering their anger and is the key to overlooking past the transgressions of others (Pro. 19:11). A wise man that has mastered his emotional anger understands the power of words to arouse anger in others or to dispel it. It is only through a soft answer that the wise man will neutralize a potentially combative situation by diffusing another person's rage (Pro. 15:1). Anger only blinds our minds to misread situations and causes us to say wrong and dumb things.

The Lord himself gave us the greatest example of a person who has conquered their anger when He taught to offer the other cheek in response to provocation (Matt 5:38-42). The wise man does not retaliate when provoked, but instead places the wrongs he may suffer before the courtroom of heaven before the Lord who will ultimately resolve any injustices (Rom. 12:17-21). The Lord not only taught this principle but also lived it during His time here on earth through the injustice that He suffered through His arrest, despicable trial and death on the cross (1 Pet. 2:19-23).

For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: (KJV 1 Pet. 2:19-23)

If anyone had a right to retaliate at unjust treatment, it certainly would have been the Lord. Yet, the Lord symbolized what it meant to endure unjust suffering. Although He could have destroyed His enemies with a word from His mouth, He suffered without uttering a word and committed Himself completely to the Father's plan. He did not utter a word during some of the most excruciating suffering anybody could ever endure. He was beaten beyond recognition, skinned alive and crucified. Yet, we demand an apology when we get our feelings hurt at the slightest thing or are ready to fight because someone looks at us the wrong way or has taken our parking spot!

Pride

Pride seems like such a short and simple word, yet what the word actually signifies can be complicated. The world tells us that we should be proud of who we are, of our heritage, of our accomplishments, our gender,

our abilities and such. Lack of prideful self-confidence is considered a character flaw by the world's standards. What does this mean for the born-again believer in Jesus Christ? Let's take a look at what the Bible teaches about the subject of pride according to Proverbs 16:18:

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. (KJV Pro. 16:18)

The pride in the context of this verse pertains to an arrogant attitude that is independent of God that will cause destructive results. Some synonyms for this type of pride would include an exaggerated self-esteem, being conceited or egotistical. Arrogance would be maximum pride. But how does pride destroy an individual and causes them to fall?

Pride not only corrodes relationships, but also burns your soul against correction and warnings. It can blind our minds to dangers and risks that will cause us to make foolish and destructive choices. Young people are especially vulnerable because they don't like to be corrected, since they tend to think they know it all. Pride is the reason young people, as well as some older individuals, have a tendency to reject any kind of authority. The rejection of authority is actually part of arrogance (2 Tim. 3:2).

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy. (KJV 2 Tim. 3:2)

The word 'covetous' in this verse has a reference to loving money. This does not mean to appreciate money, but to sin in relationship to money, such as stealing to get it. This type of mindset has a distorted scale of values. It is quite obvious we need money to live; however we should not live for money.

We also see in 2 Timothy 3:2 that arrogant pride is being 'disobedient to parents'. We have to understand that being under the authority of our parents is the first system of authority that everyone is put under. Therefore, if we do not adjust properly to the authority of parents this will mean that we will not be able to adjust to any other systems of authority. We are all under some form of authority or another in life from that of our teachers or coaches in school, our boss at work, the police officer on the street, a judge in a court of law to even respecting the authority of traffic lights.

Needless to say, without any type of authority, rules or laws, we can conclude that chaos would reign in any society. The purpose of rules is to maintain order, so although we are free, with that freedom comes responsibility to respect the freedom, privacy, property and the life of others. Therefore, freedom and authority always go together. Lack of understanding of this principle makes for an individual with a distorted scale of values, as is

the case with criminals. The criminal has the potential to end up in jail or dead since they are not in touch with this reality, and by definition, this makes for a psychotic individual who has a distorted view of reality. We don't have to look any further than the example of Satan for an illustration of this psychotic mentality. Scripture tells us that it was arrogant pride that cost the devil his place in heaven according to 1 Timothy 3:6.

Not a novice (recent convert), lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. (KJV 1 Tim. 3:6)

The condemnation of the Devil consisted of him wanting to be like God, which was not a very realistic goal at all (Isa. 14:14)! First of all, in order to be like God he would have to have the same attributes that God possesses. For the Devil to be like God would mean that he would have to be sovereign, eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, present everywhere, completely truthful, perfectly just and righteous, unchanging and have an unlimited love. Although the Devil had the greatest attractiveness, personality and intelligence, he assumed to be as great as God. Not only would this be a total impossibility for Satan to achieve, but also for any other created beings such as us imperfect limited human beings. Satan's arrogance divorced him from the reality of these facts. Arrogance will always cause us to suffer from a psychotic state because it always divorces or distorts true reality.

Pride being a basic mental attitude sin always attracts other mental attitude sins. For instance, an arrogant individual will see others who have more of what makes the arrogant individual arrogant, such as more attractiveness, a better personality, or greater ability. This in turn will trigger the mental attitude of jealousy, which is always connected with pride. This type of mindset eventually brings pettiness in regards to their jealousy and, as a result, they also become stubborn and malicious. Arrogance never travels alone, but with other mental attitude sins that always trail close behind it. Not only does arrogance cause us to be miserable, but can ultimately bring corrective discipline from God because the Epistle of James tells us that it makes us an enemy of God. (James 4:4-6).

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain? The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy. But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. (KJV Jas. 4:4-6)

Friendship with the world is the intricate interlocking sinful desires that constitute the society of the unbelieving world. Unfortunately, many

professing believers are immersed in many of the fleeting desires of Satan's world system of arrogance and this is why James is warning believers not to do this lest they become an enemy of God. The word 'resisteth' in verse 6 is translated from the Greek word *antitassetai*, a military term meaning 'to battle against'. It is the epitome of arrogance to want to go to battle with the Lord. No one has or ever will win a battle against the all-powerful God of the universe, who can destroy anybody by the word of His mouth!

This brings us to the question, what is the cure for pride? Simply put, the solution is humility, which is nothing more than to be free from any pride and arrogance. Humility does not and cannot exist in Satan's World system of arrogance. This is the reason we lose any genuine humility when we are out of the power of the Holy Spirit and are instead under the power of our sin nature. Remaining in fellowship by being under the power of the Holy Spirit is extremely vital to the believer's spiritual advancement.

By no means should humility be confused with humiliation, which is nothing more than reducing our view of ourselves to a lower status in our own eyes and that of others. Humility is not degrading oneself through some form of ascetic practice of some kind. Many times people will give up something they consider some pleasure in life or impose some sort of suffering on him or herself to show how humble they are. This type of practice is basically hypocrisy and/or ignorant foolishness and is actually a form of pride rather than humility. All forms of asceticism are related to very subtle types of arrogance.

Humility is a virtue for the born-again believer in Jesus Christ. As a system of thinking, humility is having poise as a function of our normal everyday life and having courage as a function under the abnormal circumstances of our life. This type of relaxed mental attitude recognizes that there is a greater power operating in our lives and thinks God's Biblical Truth at all times. Of course, in order to think God's Biblical Truth we have to first learn it in order to apply it. It is for this reason that renewing and rehabilitating our thinking consistently through Biblical Truth is critical to the Christian. When we become neglectful of accurately learning God's Word on a consistent basis under a qualified pastor/teacher, we are actually in a state of rebellion since Scripture mandates this of believers throughout Scripture. (Rom. 12:1-2)

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. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (KJV Rom. 12:1-2)

To reject the mandates in these verses would mean the rejection of the authority of God's Word. Every day professing Christians neglect these

mandates and make excuses why they don't abide to them through some excuse or another. As a result, they live confused about what is God's good, acceptable and perfect will for their lives. To these believers, the Epistle of James exhorts them to, 'humble yourself in the sight of God, and He shall lift you up' (Jas. 4:10).

In conclusion, it is hoped that you realize pride is extremely harmful to our spiritual advancement and should be avoided at all cost. Arrogant pride will not only cause our reality to be distorted, but also cause us to be at war with the living God of the universe. The Epistle of James is clear on how we avoid going to war with God. We are commanded to avoid the sin nature's lusts and pleasure tendencies that battle within us (Jas. 4:1). We are to reject Satan and not be preoccupied with his intricate world system in all its diverse forms of distractions (Jas. 4:7). Humility is the key to building up the capacity that the Lord is looking for in every believer who advances to the higher ground of spiritual maturity.

God's Biblical Timeline of History

