

How Does God Want Us to Rule?

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To begin with, let us look back in time and take a look at ourselves before we were called. There are a couple of scriptures that define who we were before God called us. Let's go to Romans 8:7 as a reminder. I know these are familiar scriptures, but it's often good to go back and look at ourselves before God called us and threw that switch, so to speak. We're reminded:

Romans 8:7 *Because the carnal mind [that's the fleshly or the human mind] is enmity against God [meaning the enemy of God]: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

8) *So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God.* (KJV)

That was our state when God called us. We didn't realize it at the time, but it was. From Ephesians 2:1 we can see that we walked a different path prior to our calling to which we were oblivious. It's interesting and instructive to look back and see the path that we were walking.

Ephesians 2:1 *And you has he [referring to the Father] quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

2) *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world [which we did], according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience:* (KJV)

We were part of the children of disobedience when God called us.

3) *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past [what was that conduct?] in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* (KJV)

We were right there with the rest of the world. Prior to our calling, we put ourselves first. Before anything, we put ourselves first and we were selfishly involved in Satan's world. In those days we were oblivious to what was going on in spiritual realms, we were just selfishly following the world around us. Of course, I often ask myself, how much of that is still in me? Satan's influence, the world—it's a question we all ask ourselves.

Then, in God's mercy and His love and kindness, He called us out of that world. He did so for a purpose. God doesn't randomly call us, He calls us for a purpose. Let's go to 2 Corinthians 5:17 and see what that purpose is. God doesn't do anything without a plan, without a purpose—He just doesn't randomly do something on a whim. Whatever God does, is for a reason.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ [woman too obviously, referring to humanity], he is a new creature [a new creation really]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (KJV)*

When God called us and brought us into the church, indeed, everything was new. Notice the focus in Verse 18.

18) *And all things are of God [referring to the Father], who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;*

19) *To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

20) *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (KJV)*

This tells us a lot. It tells us that we are to become a new being. This new being is now reconciled to God the Father through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, and from this point forward we are to put God first in our previously selfish lives. We do not put ourselves first, but we put God first and sublimate ourselves; putting ourselves underneath God the Father.

With that in mind, let's go to Romans 6:6, which talks about us being called for a purpose and what that purpose is and what we must be doing. We're leading up to a point here, we haven't come to the subject yet. We're going to take a long introduction, longer than usual, for me anyway.

Romans 6:6 *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him [referring to Christ], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (KJV)*

This tells us that we should not serve ourselves, or our lustful desires, our selfishness, but that we should put God first and seek to please Him. Now let's go to Ephesians 4:22, we're breaking into a train of thought Paul began in the previous chapter, chapter 3. Paul is talking to the Gentiles. He mentions it at least twice in chapter 3, so we're breaking into his writing to the Gentiles.

Ephesians 4:22 *That ye [referring to the Gentiles in Ephesus] put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*

23) [This is our job now] *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;*

24) *And that ye put on the new man, which after God [in the likeness of God] is created in righteousness and true holiness. (KJV)*

He's saying we have to put away that selfish person, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, begin to become like our Father, more and more over time. So, the great purpose of our calling is to change from the old person to the new person, every minute

of every day, becoming more like the example of Jesus Christ, having the mind of Christ that we're told about in Philippians 2. Christ pointed us all to the Father when He said,

"I can't do anything but the Father does the works".

So, we are to become like Jesus Christ and His Father. We are to become like our older Brother and His Dad. Notice the warning from Paul in verse 17 of Eph 4.

17) This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk ... (KJV)

He said, you walked as a Gentile, you came out of that, so don't turn back and walk as the other Gentiles—in other words don't follow their examples, don't follow their methods.

17 continued) ... in the vanity of their mind ... (KJV)

As we're going to see, to exalt the self, to elevate the self.

18) Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God [we're pursuing the life of God, we want to live 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 [that means lewd behavior or indecent behavior], to work all uncleanness [notice this] with greediness. (KJV)

There again, taking to the self.

20) But ye have not so learned Christ; (KJV)

Remember Christ came as a servant. He didn't come to please Himself, He came to please His Father and to serve His Father and all humanity.

21) If so, be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him [as Paul was taught], as the truth is in Jesus: (KJV)

Christ came to do His Father's will. We should follow that example and do the same and reject the Gentile way of life, which is an ungodly way of life. Obviously, we have to be thankful for our calling. We have to be faithful to our calling, willingly allowing God to rule in us and to rule over us, to put Him first and to please Him. That is our job as those whom God has called in this physical life. Here's an astounding fact. Part of our calling is for us to eventually rule. Obviously, we are taking control and ruling our lives through God's Spirit now, but we are ultimately going to rule in God's Kingdom. Like it or not, it is our destiny to rule and to help God rule. Let's go to Luke 19 and see a

parable that we're all familiar with. There is a lesson in this parable. Luke 19:11—Christ taught in parables as we know, and we will see that here.

Luke 19:11 *And as they heard these things [what Christ had been saying], he [referring to Jesus Christ] added and spoke a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. (KJV)*

Sound familiar? People in God's church have been thinking that for decades—that it should immediately appear. They thought it back then too, so He gave this parable to counter that.

12) *He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom [obviously referring to himself], and to return.*

13) *And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.*

14) [Notice this] *But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, we will not have this man [man is in italics] to reign over us. (KJV)*

That has been a consistent theme and has been consistently true since Adam and Eve made their fateful decision. Human beings do not want God to rule over them. They do not want to follow in the footsteps of God's Son. Even though they give lip service in many cases. Verse 15.

15) *And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that [notice this] he might know how much every man had gained by trading. (KJV)*

How much everyone had grown, and we would say today, had grown and overcome. In this example how much they had grown by trading? In other words, they were to do something with what Christ had given them—do something with it.

16) *Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.*

17) *And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.*

18) *And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.*

19) *And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. (KJV)*

There is an implication here. We are called to ultimately rule. In this example, it's ten cities and five cities, but it could well be in other areas as well that we just can't imagine right now—not just cities. We can be useful to God when we have proved to Him that we will yield to Him, when we have proved to Him that we will be faithful and we want to do things His way. Before this happens, before this is fulfilled, we do have to prove ourselves to God, so He can see He can trust us to rule. He will not tolerate loose cannons. He will not tolerate selfish people who want to do it their way. He is watching

us today to see if He can trust us to rule. Going on in verse 20, notice how seriously Christ takes this—this is not a game.

20) *And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:*

21) *For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou take up that thou layed not down, and reap that which thou didst not sow. (KJV)*

He was given the job to do and God was watching to see what he would do. Christ was watching to see what he would do.

22) *And he saith unto him, out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. (KJV)*

He didn't just say "you unfruitful servant", He said "you wicked servant"—that's very interesting.

22 continued) ... *Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:*

23) *Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? [Or interest]*

24) *And he said unto them that stood by, [He's teaching a lesson] Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.*

25) *(And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) [What more does he need?]*

26) [Christ answered] *For I say unto you, that unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. (KJV)*

How about the Kingdom of God being taken away from this individual?

Verse 27, here's the key, notice how seriously Christ takes this.

27) *But those mine enemies [He just called them a wicked servant], which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. (KJV)*

He says, I want to watch and make sure they no longer exist. We're not going to have those in My Father's Kingdom. It's interesting that those who do not grow are considered enemies of Christ. That's kind of a scary thought. I'll have to tell you that the inspiration for this sermon was based on a paper that Will Berg wrote in 2012. That was before I ever knew Will. Will sent me this paper a while back and I read it and it inspired me to start thinking about rulership. That wasn't the subject of his paper but a section was, and as Will was walking through that subject, it began to trigger thoughts about rulership.

In the past—we're leading up to the point—in God's church, rulership was greatly emphasized wasn't it? We heard a lot of sermons, a lot of information about rulership and how we are going to rule. In hindsight, looking back now over the decades, it's my personal opinion that we got it mostly wrong. We focused on the wrong things. Back then, rulership was putting ourselves in the spotlight. Putting ourselves in front of, or over a group of people that we would rule in the Kingdom of God. Putting ourselves in front of others, having power and having control over others to exalt the self.

Ruling—how many times have we heard it—with a rod of iron, thereby being in total control, and having those beneath you in abject fear because of the power and control that we would have as rulers. We have to ask ourselves, is that part of God's plan? Is that the way God wants rulership to operate? The question then becomes, what is the truth in God's word about this subject of rulership? Not only today, but in the World Tomorrow. So the title of the sermon is:

How Does God Want Us to Rule?

How does he want us to do that? We're going to set the background now and start at the ground floor with point number one, let's ask the question:

1. How did the Gentiles rule?

That's where we came from, as we're going to see. Remember we were warned in Ephesians 4:17, that we are not to walk as the Gentiles walk—we shouldn't do that. Let's go to Matthew 20:25, out of the New Living Translation. Christ makes some fundamental observations about how the world rules.

Matthew 20:25 *But Jesus called them [the disciples] together and said, You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. (KJV)*

When you just read this, how true that is. Kings are tyrants and officials lord it over the people beneath them.

Abraham Lincoln said, "If you want to test a man's character, give him power."

That is when we really do see character come out.

Let's look at some historical examples—some out of the Bible and some out of modern history. You notice the Assyrians, who conquered the northern ten tribes, were notoriously cruel in their rulership. Human life did not mean much to them and they ruled by fear. Remember the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, what he did after conquering Judah? He put King Zedekiah's eyes out right after he had murdered Zedekiah's children, so that the last thing he would see with those eyes was the death of his children. We forget, that in most of human history, kings had life and death power. We're not used to that here in Canada, the United States, Australia, or Great

Britain. But not that long ago—200 to 300 years ago—when a king ruled, he could have people exterminated at his whim; we forget that. The Romans were very cruel—they invented crucifixion. They used slavery and oppression. The early Christians were fed to wild animals in the arena for the entertainment of the populous. Hitler, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung,, Pol Pot and their ilk, are responsible for the deaths of tens of millions of people. Absolutely no respect for human life or human dignity.

Then of course, the modern governments today. We think we are more civilized, and it is true. The President of the United States doesn't execute people on a whim—he would probably want to, but he doesn't, thankfully. Modern governments today are ruled by lies, by deceit, by corruption, by competition and these government agencies and the politics involved, do what is best for the leader, do what is best for the party in the case of democracy—they do what is best in their own interests. I think it is safe to say, that most often they do not do what is best for the people that they are serving or ruling or overseeing.

Gentile rule, as we've seen (with just a brief look at history) is a product of an unconverted mind without the benefit of God's law. At least Israel had God's law. They had unconverted minds, but they had God's law. They had God's influence directly. The fact is that Gentile rule is a product of an unconverted mind, totally unencumbered by God's law. They just do whatever they want and we see the results. This Gentile way of ruling crept into the rulership of Judah during Christ's day. The scribes and the pharisees and religious rulers ruled as Gentiles, while claiming to be loyal to God.

Let's go to Matthew 23:1. We know Matthew 23 is Christ's richly deserved rant against the religious leaders of the day. I'll read this out of the New Living Translation.

Matthew 23:1 *Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples,*

2) The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses.

3) So, practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don't follow their example. For they don't practice what they teach.

4) They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden. (NLT)

Looking out for their own interests, not the interests of the average Jew of the day.

5) Everything they do is for show [meaning to exalt the self, exalt their position]. On their arms they wear extra wide prayer boxes with Scripture verses inside, and they wear robes with extra-long tassels.

6) And they love to sit at the head table at banquets [again, in the focus, in the limelight] and in the seats of honor in the synagogues. [To be exalted in front of the other people.]

7) They love to receive respectful greetings as they walk in the marketplaces, and to be called Rabbi.

- 8) *Don't let anyone call you Rabbi, for you have only one teacher, and all of you are equal as brothers and sisters. [Not exalting one's self above others.]*
- 9) *And don't address anyone here on earth as Father, for only God in heaven is your Father.*
- 10) *And don't let anyone call you Teacher, for you have only one teacher, the Messiah. (NLT)*

The term "Mister", which is commonly used today and was used in the church almost exclusively, is a form of "Master", if you go back and look at the origin of that word. That is why we discourage using that term—calling one another Mr. Yes, it is a form of respect and I understand that. However, if you look at the origin of the word, you are basically saying "Master so and so", and we just read that we are not to do that.

Now in verse 11, Christ introduces the religious leaders of the day to a radical concept.

- 11) *The greatest among you must be a servant. (NLT)*

What a concept—the greatest among you, you should be the greatest servant.

- 12) *But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. (NLT)*

Verse 23.

- 23) *What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. (NLT)*

This was a radical concept to those around them. You could see the Pharisees and the Sadducees with their robes and tassels and other paraphernalia Christ is saying,

"Hey guys, you need to get down in the trenches and you need to work alongside to help and serve and not put yourself up on a pedestal"

The Gentile rule had crept into the religious life of both the Pharisees of Christ's day as well as the Romans. Gentile rule was part and parcel of the Roman Empire and it continues to this day. To promote the self, God's people are lorded over.

Which leads to point number two.

2. Gentile rule crept into the church of God.

Despite what we just read, despite what Christ just told us, Gentile rule has crept into the church of God. Let's go back to Matthew 20 where we read verse 25 earlier and we will go on from there. I'll read it out of the New Living Translation again.

Matthew 20:25 *But Jesus called them together and said, You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them.*

26) *But among you it will be different.* (NLT)

He says don't do it that way, I will show you a different way.

26 continued) ... *Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant,*

27) *and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave.*

28) *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."* (NLT)

Following in Christ's footsteps is what all of us should do - Not to be served, but to serve. Then beginning in the late '50's early '60's, in the Worldwide Church of God, (which many of us have come out of), the church began to rule as Gentiles rule. Over time, the leaders began to look at themselves as the ones who should be served rather than the ones who should do service to others.

There was a growing emphasis in the '50's and certainly into the '60's of rank, of title, of position—great emphasis on that. The leaders began to exercise authority for their own benefit. Leaders lived opulently at the campuses, they lived opulently while the brethren were often hurting—hurting financially, hurting in support and encouragement. They were hurting in many ways because the emphasis among the leadership was on the self and what is 'good for me and my life and my comfort'. They began to exercise authority for their own benefit.

I remember one evangelist said, referring to the Kingdom of God—I've mentioned it before—he was complaining that all the good jobs are already taken. He was talking about in the Kingdom; David has a job and all the apostles have the top jobs, indicating that I really want one of those, I deserve one of those but they're already taken and he was grouching about that. Most of the churches of God today—I'm speaking of the greater church—continue in that Gentile rule by attempting to reinvent the Worldwide Church of God. They want to reinvent that way of ruling, where there are the leaders and then there is everybody else. That is a sad commentary, but it's true.

Let's ask the question, under point number two, specifically, how is Gentile rule manifested and how has it been manifested in the church over the decades?

Point A, if you like to outline:

2A. Gentile rule respects persons.

This is part and parcel of Gentile rule, because you have a class hierarchical system that respects persons. When we say you have respect of persons, that means you preferentially treat someone—give someone favor—over somebody else. Preferential treatment can be based upon, one's income, one's social status, one's education, maybe the amount of tithes they contribute, so they were considered to be in a preferential class so to speak.

Let me give you two examples. I was in a church group, twenty to twenty-five years ago, after the breakup of Worldwide and there was a new member from a different part of the country and he was the former CEO of a well-known company. If I mentioned the company, everybody would know the company's name. Because of his resume and his reputation, the pastor felt that this guy walked on water as he was of the top one percent, so to speak. He was treated differently. He had reserved seats at the Feast, right in the front, attended all the ministerial meetings and pontificated at those meetings. He was just coming into the church, with not a whole lot of experience, but was treated in a preferential manner.

Contrast that with a man that I know personally, who came to the Feast in overalls. He walked in the door at the Feast in overalls. They were clean, and he had actually taken an iron and pressed his overalls and cleaned his work boots—they were clean too—he wore a flannel shirt--- it was clean. The contrast between the two men --- in clothes only--- was obvious. The head guy of the Feast at that time was a well-known minister and if I mentioned his name everybody would know him. This fellow in the overalls came and joined a group which was around this minister, who was talking about something and he asked the minister a question.

The minister refused to make eye contact with him, he refused to acknowledge his presence, he refused to acknowledge the question. This fellow stood there, kind of bewildered and the minister went on talking and addressing the three or four or five people in the group, but he would address everyone and make eye contact with everyone, except for the man in the overalls. It was obvious from his vocabulary that he didn't have a great education, but he was asking a question and it was as though he did not exist. Again, I'm making a contrast here.

What does the Bible say about that? We know the scripture, let's go to James 2:1. James is talking to all of us, talking to all of those alive at the time but talking to us today.

James 2:1 *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.* (KJV)

Then he goes on to talk about what I've just mentioned,

verse 2—if a guy comes in with his expensive clothes and maybe an expensive car in the parking lot and all of that and then in comes a poor man, at the end of verse 2, in his overalls and then verse 3.

3) *And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing ... (KJV)*

Mark Mickelson talked during the last sermon or the sermon before about how the meanings of words have changed and, in the Greek, it means magnificent clothing or gorgeous clothing, not as it's commonly used today. He walks in, in these gorgeous clothes.

3 continued) *... and say unto him, sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: (KJV)*

You sit at my feet.

4) *Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? (KJV)*

You see the CEO and the man in overalls were treated differently, looked at differently, thought about differently.

5) *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

6) *But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?*

7) *Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? (KJV)*

We hear that worthy name every day in conversations, on the street, over the media.

8) *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well:*

9) *But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. (KJV)*

Respect of persons is the Gentile way. Our older Brother, as you know, Jesus Christ, had no respect of persons. He corrected the wealthy, He ate with a tax collector, He washed people's feet and He came, as we know, as a servant.

Point B, the second aspect of Gentile rule.

2B. Looks down on others.

In the church, sadly to say, there has been looking down on brethren. I remember in the early '70's I moved to Boston to get a job, I was hired by a company I wanted to go

work for and I think it was my first service in Boston. There was a recent A.C. graduate that came out as an assistant minister and was a newly minted elder and somebody came up (I had just been introduced) and said, someone told me *this*, what do you think? The first thing out of his mouth—I've told this before—don't listen to the dumb sheep. Right out of this newly graduated A.C. graduate and a newly minted minister. By the way he later became head of the ministry after Worldwide fell apart, he became head of the ministry at Worldwide; after they made this giant U-turn. This incident pictured perfectly, who was worthy of the minister's attention and who was not; who was worthy to be listened to and who was not. If you hadn't graduated from A.C. or you weren't a minister or a full-time employee, your thoughts and questions were not worthy of consideration—perfect picture of that.

What does the Bible say about that? Philippians 2:3, we won't turn there; let each esteem others better than yourselves. That's a law, that is a commandment, that is something we should all do, is esteem the other person better than ourselves.

Looking down on others has no place in God's church, or in the Kingdom of God. Is God going to allow somebody in the Kingdom of God, who rules as a Gentile and looks down on other people in God's Kingdom? It's not going to happen—it is just not going to happen.

That's one thing we've learned—the elders—is that we don't want to do that. It's amazing, we get doctrinal papers from brethren. I got one the other day. We get them regularly and they are vetted and they are looked at and they are read and they are not thrown in the trash can. We have all learned that all of us have a brain, all of us have God's Holy Spirit and brethren, ministers—doesn't make any difference—read their Bible and God can inspire a thought or a concept that maybe we hadn't considered so we should consider it. You can't do that if you look down on other people.

The third area of Gentile rule, point C.

3C. It emphasizes class and it emphasizes rank.

I was ordained an elder in 1974 and I never went to A.C, never went to Ambassador College. Went to plenty of ministerial conferences and refreshing programs and that, over the years, but because of that—particularly in the Worldwide days—I was definitely treated like an outsider. I know what it feels like to not be an A.C. graduate, not to be employed full time in the ministry and if you weren't either of those, you were definitely a second-class Christian, minister or second-class person. There was a definite class or rank consciousness at that time.

I remember even the year one graduated from Ambassador College was taken into consideration as those who had graduated earlier were more highly regarded than those who came along later. I don't think I told Mark this, but about twenty years ago I heard a minister put down Mark Mickelson because this minister graduated two years

before Mark did, therefore he somehow considered he was superior to the man he was putting down, which happened to be Mark Mickelson. Crazy how that works.

I remember my first ministerial lunch I attended was that fall at the Feast in Mount Poconos in 1974 and we sat down at a table, it was a ministerial lunch, there was a husband and wife across from me and the wife was directly across from me and I introduced myself. We were all there together and her first question was, when did you graduate from Ambassador College and I looked her in the eye and said, I haven't. She stuck her nose up in the air, turned this way and started talking with the person on the other side. I thought to myself, well I guess I've been put in my place. Like that minister I was telling you about with the guy with the overalls, she never acknowledged, from that point forward, that I even existed. She would not make eye contact, she would not talk. This is in some ways a perfect picture of this class and rank system.

I forgot to mention to a woman in church when she came in this morning, that I wanted to mention her example—she and her husband were at Pasadena and she became friends with an Evangelist's wife. Her husband was a local Elder and she became friends with an Evangelist's wife until somebody came up and said you can't do that. What? You can't do that? Evangelist's wives don't associate with local Elder's wives, they associate with other Evangelist's wives—you cannot do that, that is unseemly. That is just not the way it's done around here. It is sad, but it is true.

I remember a ministerial conference that I went to, this is now twenty-five years ago after the breakup of Worldwide and the first day of the conference I sat and listened to what was going on. The second day I was hearing the same old stuff, a lot of what I have just mentioned to you and finally I had just had enough. I thought, I can't keep quiet about this. There were two Evangelists present. I raised my hand, was called on and I stood up. I went on a five or ten minute monologue about everything that we've just talked about, about the class rank system, looking down on other people, respect of persons and I pointed out that this is not God's way and we can't keep doing this.

I thought, as I sat down, one of two things is going to happen; they are going to show me the door, or, maybe there could be a little bit of change. I was wrong on both counts. They gave lip service, but not one thing changed—not one thing changed. What does the Bible say about class consciousness?

Let's go to Luke 14:1. Reading out of the King James.

Luke 14:1 *And it came to pass, as he [referring to Christ] went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him. (KJV)*

They were waiting to see what He was going to do, they wanted to trip Him up if they could, find a way to undo Him. Verse 7.

7) *And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked [those who were invited to this Pharisees house] how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,*

8) *When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; [or invited by him]*

9) *And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.*

10) *But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.*

11) [Here's the principle] *For whosoever exalteth himself [notice how often this is repeated in the New Testament] shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (KJV)*

Even the military knew this. A good officer did not eat until all the troops were fed. A good officer would put himself last. He put his troops first to make sure they were fed, bedded down and taken care of, and were well equipped before he would go off and do anything—until those troops were taken care of.

Let's contrast this class-conscious attitude that permeated the church with David's attitude. Let's go to Psalm 84 and just read one verse, verse 10. Notice here, David is the king of Israel. He had a position that he could do whatever he wanted basically.

Psalm 84:10 *For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand [a thousand days without being in God's courts]. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. (KJV)*

A Gentile tent if you want to insert that. He said I would rather be a doorkeeper. If I'm a doorkeeper in God's Kingdom, so be it, I'm just happy to be there. If we exalt the self, if we rule as a Gentile, we are not going to be in God's Kingdom; we're just not going to be there, it won't happen. We must rule God's way and not the Gentile way. Remember the Gentile way—I'm not putting down any race or any group of people—the point is the Gentile way was without God's Spirit and without the benefit of God's law, you throw in human nature and this is what you get, you get the Gentile way.

Over the years—decades—I've met many fine, dedicated ministers and wives—many. But I've also met hirelings, politicians, ladder climbers and wolves, ruling the Gentile way. When you're in that environment, as we all are out in the world, if we have a job out in the world, we see Godly examples in the church and when you see Godly examples in the church you think, this is the way it ought to be done, this is the way to do it, this is the way I want to do it.

Sadly, in other cases, whether it's in the church or out, we witness Gentile rule. We learn over time that this is not the way it should be done, or we think to ourselves, if I ever get in a position to make those decisions, we're not going to do it that way. God is going to put us in positions of rulership and He has to know before He gives us eternal

life that we are not going to rule the Gentile way. We are going to rule God's way. He puts us in a position—sometimes we wonder why is God putting me here in this horrible environment—but He puts us in these positions to learn from error. I've served under some, I would say, who did not exhibit the fruits of God's Holy Spirit. Some ministers who did not exhibit the fruits of God's Spirit and I'm thinking, God why did you put me here? In hind sight, I look back and He put me there to show the good way versus the bad way; the right way versus the wrong way, so that, down the road in God's Kingdom, we've had experience. We know what God wants and we see the fruit of what the Gentile way produces. He puts all of us in that position. George Santayana was a philosopher and author—he died in 1952—his famous quote was:

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

So God expects us to learn from the past and not repeat the errors of the past. We do our best not to repeat that. At our Feast sites, there's no ministerial sections, there's no head tables, the ministers fellowship and intermingle with everybody because we are all in this together. We're human beings, in this together and we need to esteem one another better than ourselves.

Now that we've seen the Gentile rule—we have seen what we came from, we've seen what the Gentile rule is. We have seen how it crept into the church and that there is a class system and there is rank consciousness and respect of persons and all of that. We see the fact that it did creep into the church, so let's ask the question—the third and last point:

3. How does God want us to rule.

We've seen the Gentile way, we've seen the ungodly way, how does God want us to rule. Once we were called—we talked about that in the introduction—we come under God's authority. We come under God's authority in every aspect of our lives. He watches us to see if we will willingly submit. If somebody "submits" with a gun to their head, they're not really submitting because once the gun is removed, they will go and do what they want to do. God wants to see if we will willing submit to Him because we love Him, if we put Him first and if we have learned through experience that His way is the best.

Let's go to James 4:7—very familiar scripture. This is our job today; this is our job. This is so fundamental.

James 4:7 *Submit yourselves therefore to God. [Now he draws a contrast]
Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (KJV)*

He is telling us, don't submit to the devil and resist God. He says submit to God and then resist, with all your might through the power of God's Spirit, the devil and his influence, his provocations, his thoughts, his emotions that he can plant in our head. We should get to the point where we want God to rule us. We want God to rule over us

because He is Almighty, He is above all, He is the Creator and Sustainer of everything that is. We are just human beings and we just want to fall on our face with our head to the floor and say, God I am Yours, do with me what You want because I will submit to You in all matters. We want God to rule over us.

How does God rule? We're going to look at just a few scriptures, I know we could spend ten sermons on this. Let's go to Deuteronomy 4:31. We know Deuteronomy was written by Moses shortly before his death and he was summarizing all that had happened since God had called him out of Egypt. In Deuteronomy 4:31, notice what he says.

Deuteronomy 4:31 *(For the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them. (KJV)*

The key here is that God is a merciful God. He is not going to turn His back on us and walk away. We can walk away from Him, yes, but He won't forget His promises to us. He is merciful. Now look at Psalm 67:4. Notice how God rules and judges.

Psalm 67:4 *O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou [referring to Jehovah] shalt judge the people righteously [not with respect of persons, not looking down on people], and govern the nations upon earth. Selah. (KJV)*

I looked up the Hebrew word "righteously" and it's really interesting. It means, an even place or a plain—meaning a flat area. A plain or even place, that's what righteously comes from. Meaning, nobody is higher than anybody else. We're all—as we would say today—all on the same playing field and God judges us in a righteous manner, not preferring one over the other; not elevating one over the other. We're all judged according to His standards—His righteous standards.

Now let's go to Psalm 89:14 This tells us the foundation of God's rule. I'll read this out of the New King James.

Psalm 89:14 *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; [Righteousness and justice] Mercy and truth go before Your face. (NKJV)*

So we see here again, justice, righteousness, mercy, truth, is how God rules. God doesn't make up things as He goes. God has a foundation, a standard that never changes because God never changes. We've seen administrations and people justifying positions—they just make it up as they go along. No documentation, no background, no foundation, they just make it up; God doesn't do that.

Finally, how does God rule? Let's go to Isaiah 30:18. This is a millennial setting, yes, but it applies to the first fruits today. It's a principle. Yes, it's true in the millennium but it applies to us today. Notice how God rules.

Isaiah 30:18 *And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore, will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.*

19) *For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: [here we go again] he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. (KJV)*

How would you like to be ruled by an all-powerful Being who has this approach? Wouldn't it be a joy? It will be a joy to submit to an all-powerful Being who doesn't take orders from anybody but he rules this way—in justice, in mercy, in graciousness, in kindness, in gentleness. It's obvious when you put all the scriptures together—and there are dozens and dozens and dozens—that God rules by the fruits of His very own Spirit. He rules by the fruits of His Spirit. We know in Galatians 5:22, what is the first one? Love—He rules by love and in joy and in peace and in longsuffering and goodness. God rules by the very characteristics that He has, that is the very manifestation in behavior of His Holy Spirit. These scriptures, just the few that we read, are the standards by which God governs and God rules, now and in the future. What a contrast between God's way and the Gentile way, that we have talked about before. Where the playing field isn't even, where there is respect of persons, where there is looking down on other people, where human life means nothing and it's all about the self and exalting the self, versus God's way. This is the way Christ manifested when He was on this earth, coming as a servant; to serve those whom God had called and ultimately to serve all mankind. What a contrast and what a joy to be under God's rule. The point is, in closing out this last point, the point that should overwhelm us is the fact that a converted mind should rule just as we have heard. A converted mind should rule as Christ ruled. A converted mind should rule the way God rules. In whatever ways we rule today, whether it's in a marriage or child rearing or maybe on a job, in or out of the church, we should rule as God and Christ rule. We can demonstrate to God that that's the way we would rule if He gives us eternal life, always exhibiting the fruits of His Holy Spirit when we rule, when we deal with others.

Let's summarize now. How does God rule? By the fruits of His very Spirit and we should rule by the fruits of the Holy righteous character that we should be developing through that very same Spirit. All we have to do is follow Christ's examples.

Let's go to Matthew 20:28, we read it earlier. What did Christ say? Why did He say He came? What was His purpose? What was His point?

Matthew 20:28 *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (KJV)*

Our job is to follow in Christ's footsteps, in whatever position or place we find ourselves. Let's go Colossians 3:10 We are to follow in our older Brother's footsteps. He is our mentor. He is the first of the firstfruits. He is the pioneer and author of our salvation.

Colossians 3:10 *And have put on the new [man is in italics] man [or person], which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: [the new man] (KJV)*

So, we follow the image of God and the image of Christ. They share the same nature through the same Spirit that They have, so by exercising that Spirit we can follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. He was perfect and that just blows my mind. Getting up every day, every second of every day, every thought, every deed, every word—perfect. Christ has shown us the way, He has set the example. Remember He said—we won't turn there—in John 4:3

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"My food is to do the will of My Father who sent Me."

That was His will and that should obviously be our will. People get confused over this—there is no confusion—Christ came to aggrandize His Father, not aggrandize Himself. He has set that example for the ministry over the decades. If Christ didn't come to exalt Himself but came to exalt His Father, what is a human minister supposed to do? Exalt Himself? Of course not—he is to exalt His Father, God Almighty. Our duty, our calling, is to rule God's way and not the Gentile way, here on this earth and in God's Kingdom.

Let's go to a final scripture in Matthew 7:21 Christ is saying again, emphasizing the fact, that He is pointing us to His Father. He's not pointing us to Himself. Obviously, this is a warning too.

Matthew 7:21 *Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; (KJV)*

Just because we wave hands and praise Jesus Christ, doesn't guarantee us a thing—it doesn't.

21 continued) ... *but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (KJV)*

We are here to rule God's way, not the Gentile way, not the unconverted way, not the worldly way, not the selfish way. We have to follow in the footsteps of our older Brother, ruling by the fruits of the very Spirit of God Almighty, with the goal of serving others and not ourselves, seeking the Father's way above all and not our own.