

# Throwing Stones

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Well, hello to everyone here and everyone else wherever you may be. Actually we're freezing to death here. I don't know about you wherever you might be. I hope you're enjoying the sun in Australia.

I did a google search a while back on the subject of stoning. Now, I'm not talking about smoking dope or anything like that. It's kind of shocking in this day and age to realize, and I didn't really know this until I looked into it and did a little bit of research, that stoning is practiced as a method of execution in eight countries around the world. It's really not reported too much in this country. And we know that is for political reasons. It's kind of downplayed. Every once in a while we'll hear something about an honor killing or something like that. It's just horrible that it's a young girl or a woman in some families. It's terrible that those things go on like that. And the media, not to badmouth the media any, but sometimes they like the sensationalism of things like that and they'll do it for the shock effect.

But for the sermon today, the stoning was prescribed in the Old Testament. If you were sentenced to capital punishment, you were stoned. In the first five books of the Bible, the Torah, we know we have that recorded for us. And I've just made a bullet list of the situations where a person could be stoned.

- If you were touching Mount Sinai whenever God was giving Moses the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19).
- If an ox gores someone, the ox should be stoned (Exodus 21).
- Breaking the Sabbath (Numbers 15), you could be stoned for that.
- Giving one's offspring to Molech, which was child sacrifice, you could be stoned for that, should be, actually (Leviticus 20).
- Having a familiar spirit or being a wizard, you could be stoned for that (Leviticus 20).
- Cursing God (Leviticus 24).
- Engaging in idolatry (Deuteronomy 17) or seducing others to do that (Deuteronomy 13).
- Rebellion against parents (Deuteronomy 13).
- Getting married as though a virgin, defrauding your mate, when you are not a virgin. You can be stoned for that (Deuteronomy 22).
- Sexual intercourse between a man and a woman engaged to another man, both would be stoned (Deuteronomy 22).

That's just a sample of some of the Old Testament references where you could be stoned.

In the Mishna, which is the Jewish oral tradition, they have a similar bullet list. I'll just go through a few of those. It says in the Mishna, and this is tradition but it's taken from a lot of those things we just mentioned that are in the supposed "law of Moses." The first one is:

- One could be stoned for having sexual relations with his mother.
- With his father's wife. (That's not the biological mother. We have an example of that in the New Testament in Corinthians.)
- With his daughter-in-law.
- With a human male, which is talking about homosexuality.
- You could be stoned for bestiality, a human being having sex with an animal.
- A blasphemer, you could be stoned for that.
- Again, idolater.
- You could be, again, sacrificing one of your children to false Gods.

Again, they have a lot of the same ones. They repeat them.

- Familiar spirits or being a wizard, you can be stoned.
- Violating the Sabbath.
- Cursing your mother and father.
- Leading someone into worshipping false idols.

And on and on it goes. Again, that's just a sample of some of the offenses that stoning is prescribed for as a punishment. That's from the perspective of the Old Testament administration of the law.

In the New Testament, we have the example of stoning. We have the example of Stephen being stoned. That's found in Acts. Paul was stoned at Lystra at the instigation of the Jews. He was left for dead, but he was revived. God had more for him to do. You can find that in Acts 14.

Because of our church upbringing, we have developed through the years—probably through centuries actually—some sayings from the Bible. We have the saying that "People that live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones." There's a corollary to that says, "If you live in a neighborhood of glass houses, nobody should throw stones." Of course, what that means is that's just figurative use of that expression there. And we know what that means—that it's just projecting your emotions, particularly negative emotion, dislike, slander onto someone else, "throwing stones" in that sense.

A lot of people think that that saying "throwing stones" is just a popular variation of that account in John 8, if you'll be turning there, of the woman taken in adultery because they say, "Well, Christ taught us in that particular account that you shouldn't throw stones if you have faults of your own." And they derive that from that account.

But if you will, turn over to John 8. And I've titled this simply Throwing Stones or The Lessons from John 8 in this account of the woman taken in adultery. John 8 beginning in verse 1 and this is from the New King James.

**John 8:1.** *But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.*

*2) Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them.*

*3) Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, ... (NKJ)*

And, as we know later, they're trying to set Him up here. They're working a trap. In fact, I don't know if you've ever noticed the attempts that the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Scribes... And they would use other people, but you could almost catalog the times that they tried to trap Christ to accuse Him of something. They wanted to kill Him.

But in this account, let's note two valuable lessons. And I'm going to work the sermon around these two points, but there are very valuable lessons here. Sometimes we read over these accounts, these examples that we have and we might just read over the real lessons that are embedded in the account. But these two things that are in this particular account here, the woman caught in adultery, in John 8: (1) let's note the attitude and the approach of the Scribes and the Pharisees here, and (2) Jesus' response to them and His attitude and His approach, the way He dealt with this terrified woman.

The important thing is here... And I appreciate the sermonette by John and I'm always amazed at that, how these things fit together. They just seem to do that. He was talking about repentance for bad fruit. One thing we can think about, thinking about the approaches of the Pharisees and the approach of Christ, is to think about which approach, which attitude we would have. We might think we have the one we need, but we might be fooling ourselves too. We'll get into that later as we go along here.

Let's continue in John 8 verse 4:

**John 8:4.** *... they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act." (NKJ)*

Now, you know if this were one of our modern movies or a novel, we'd have the obligatory sex scene here. Verse 5:

**John 8:5.** *"Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" (NKJ)*

You can see the tone of their attitude here. It's almost like they're saying, "What do you say, you upstart?" Verse 6:

**John 8:6.** *This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. ... (NKJ)*

Which was their motive all along! Actually you can see also in their attitude when they referenced “Well, Moses commanded us.” Well, it’s God’s law that He gave through Moses. It’s not Moses’ law. A lot of people will use that to say that the Old Testament, that the law has been done away; that it was Moses’ law. Well, it is God’s law.

And besides, when you get into this account here, you can see that they’ve left out certain details of this particular thing that happened to this woman, the things that she was involved in. Their whole approach there was like Christ wouldn’t know the difference, but He did because He was there, as we’ll see.

But continuing the last part of verse 6:

**John 8:6b.** *... But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. (NKJ)*

I think it’s kind of interesting too if you look at the various accounts where Christ is confronted with different things, particularly when He’s dealing with a problem and remember? He always has His disciples there. And He takes every opportunity to teach them something. In this particular case, when they accused Him, “What do you say?” He didn’t answer them a bit. He didn’t say a thing. Maybe He was thinking, “Don’t answer a fool according to their folly.” But He was, actually when you get into it farther, He was taking this opportunity to teach a lesson to His disciples, and, by extension, us too because it’s recorded for us.

Verse 7:

**John 8:7.** *So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” (NKJ)*

They didn’t say anything. And again, verse 8, the second time:

**John 8:8.** *And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. (NKJ)*

Now this is kind of where the theory, the idea comes that what He wrote on the ground were the ten commandments. We’ve heard that probably many times down through the years. Some commentators think that’s symbolic of the second set of stones that God gave to Moses and rewrote the ten commandments because he broke the first set. Right? And that’s found in Exodus 34. I’ll just read that as a reference.

**Exodus 34:1.** *And the LORD said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke. (NKJ)*

That's where they get that idea.

But the point there again is that these scribes and these Pharisees were trying to snooker Him by leaving out details here. Because the criteria for adultery, if we really looked into that in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, you have to ask the question, "Where is the man?" Because, if that were really the case, according to what they were trying to quote and to trap Christ with. they needed the man there if it really was adultery.

Another theory is there that maybe when He stooped down, He might have wrote their sexual sins for each one of them. It's hard to say. We really don't know. That's one of those "We'll ask Him someday" questions.

But going on in verse 9 of John 8:

**John 8:9.** *Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, (NKJ)*

So whatever He wrote, it got through to them. It had an effect on these hard-hearted men. He convicted them by their own guilt, probably not to repentance as John was talking about in the sermonette, like in Acts 8 when many heard the words that were, the first sermons that were preached, they repented, but these individuals didn't do that.

If you look at "conscience" in the Greek, the meaning of the Greek here is that it's something that you own. It's not something that you can blame on someone else. So, they had some guilt and that's what He got through to them. They honestly had to acknowledge what He wrote was the truth there.

And guilt can be, when you think of the attitude and the approach of these individuals, guilt with most of us can be a healthy response, a little bit like what John was talking about in the sermonette. If we know that we have sinned, it does affect our conscience. We have some guilt and, hopefully, we will repent of that.

But, depending on the attitude and the approach of the person, a lot of times there won't be any guilt. There won't be any true remorse there. There won't be any true repentance there because it's pride. You can't see that they have a problem and, as we look at the Pharisees throughout the accounts in the New Testament, we can see that they wouldn't even acknowledge the fact that they had any problems; they had any sins. And it could also be callousness. Look what they were doing here to this woman. They didn't have any guilt. It wasn't affecting their conscience other than

what He got through to them. They had this superior arrogant approach that they were doing. They didn't have any guilt.

Do you remember Matthew 23 where Christ talked about these? I thought John was going to get there, but he didn't, in the sermonette. But He upbraided these Scribes and Pharisees because of their attitude.

And, again, we have to ask ourselves: If we look at all those descriptions that Christ gave—and He's talking about their attitudes, their approach, what's inside of them and the way they're acting, their behaviors in Matthew 23 (but we're not going to go there—but, again, looking at that account looking at this account, we have to ask ourselves again: Where is our attitude? Where is our approach? Do we fit anywhere in these descriptions? Sometimes we think that we won't, but a lot of times we'll have to look at ourselves. We'll have to really examine ourselves to see that.

But going back to verse 9 of John 8, finishing that up:

***John 8:9b.*** [So, they] went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. (NKJ)

And that tells you something there too, because they had a pecking order. They had a hierarchy right there. They had a superiority structure even among themselves because they went out from the smallest to the greatest. It's actually talking about the oldest to the youngest. These older ones actually led these individuals into this, because when they went out, the older ones went out first. They were the ones that were convicted first. That's kind of interesting when you think about the experience they had: maybe the sins they had accumulated in their lives; maybe they had more that Christ got through when He did prick their conscience. That's just a sideline there.

Anyhow, at the end of verse 9, John 8:

***John 8:9 continued.*** And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. (NKJ)

Remember? He was at the Temple. They were others there.

So, just looking at those verses in John 8 verses 3 through 9, it gives us a profile of the attitude, that terrible attitude that the Scribes and the Pharisees had. That attitude, even if we look at other places, Paul dealt with this too. And just as a reference scripture, Titus 1. You don't need to turn over there, unless you want to, but in Titus 1 verses 15 and 16, it's in the context of the circumcision. In other words, Paul is warning Titus about the attitude and the approach of the Pharisees and the adverse influence they were having on the congregations. Verse 15 of Titus 1 says:

**Titus 1:15.** *To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled [or ungodly] and unbelieving nothing is pure; ... (NKJ)*

Nothing is godly to them!

**Titus 1:15b.** *...but even their mind and conscience are defiled.*

*16) They profess to know God, [which these individuals did] but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. (NKJ)*

And remember it's the same people, it's this same attitude, the same approach. One commentator said that these individuals had a high intensity hatred for Christ. And it comes out in almost all of the accounts that you see. Just looking at the account there in John 8 of the woman taken in adultery, those same people and that self-righteous approach and attitude, they took a savage delight in catching this woman and dragging her before Christ. In their pompous pride, they were presenting her as a test case for Him so they could accuse Him. They thought they had Him between a rock and a hard place because the Old Testament said (if they were actually following the law), but being under Roman rule, they couldn't do anything unless the Romans approved it. They really wanted to assassinate Him, but they were afraid of the people. That tells a bit more about their deviousness and the way they operated. In fact, another reference is Matthew 21, where it talks a little bit about that, verses 45 and 46. And, again, this is just a reference, but it says in Matthew 21:45:

**Matthew 21:45.** *Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. (NKJ)*

He was holding those parables, those illustrations up like mirror to show them what they were like! And, [it's] the same thing here in dealing with this woman. Verse 46 says:

**Matthew 21:46.** *But when they sought to lay hands on Him, ... (NKJ)*

Again, they wanted to kill Him. They wanted to assassinate Him.

**Matthew 21:46b.** *...they feared the multitudes, ... (NKJ)*

It's the polls! Don't you know? "The polls aren't favorable to us. So, maybe we had better wait."

**Matthew 21:46 continued.** *...because they took Him for a prophet. (NKJ)*

The people did. So, they didn't want to... Again, their whole attitude and approach was just really bad and it was evil, as it says in some places.

Thinking about when they asked Him, “Moses commanded us that we should stone her; what do you say?” Have you ever heard someone say that to you? In my experience, they don’t really want to know what I say. What they really wanted to do was tell me what they say. They want to promote their ideas with me. It’s kind of similar to the example where we had someone at one point say in a congregation that “I don’t really believe the same things you do.” Well, that’s a bait and switch kind of expression because when someone says that, they don’t care what you believe. They want to start a debate or argument on what they believe, how they view things. Sometimes that leads right into heresy. But that was their approach and that was their little trap they were trying to lay for Him is the point, but He pretty effectively shut them down. He shut them up and taught His disciples a valuable lesson there. He just bent down and He wrote on the ground and he skewered them with their own guilt. That’s what He did.

But continuing in John 8 verse 10, it goes on in that account.

**John 8:10.** *When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”*  
11) *She said, “No one, Lord.” ... (NKJ)*

Remember this woman was scared to death.

**John 8:11b.** *... And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.” (NKJ)*

A lot of people will try to use that as “The laws don’t really count. They’re not really in effect and you don’t really have to pay too much attention to them because Christ just forgave them all.” Well, that’s not true. Any basic Bible student knows that’s not scriptural.

Now, another thing, they’re fooling around. They’re trying to con Him a little bit too, because, again, they think that He doesn’t know all the details and the particulars of the law for adultery and all that. Again, there’s no man there. This woman may have been a prostitute. We don’t know that. The fact that they did bring the woman clearly shows that they weren’t applying the law there of accusing her of adultery because if one were married, or both were married, they were stoned according to the law, the Old Testament law.

But the important thing here and what I’m trying to point out is Christ’s approach, and it’s something actually which we should strive to emulate. Again, there are two important lessons there when we analyze this account—the approach of the Scribes and Pharisees and Christ’s approach.

Human nature has never changed. There are people just like those Scribes and Pharisees that like to point out other people’s sins. They get a certain satisfaction out



of that. There is a kind of air of superiority and smugness whenever someone points out someone else's sins.

Later on, Paul had to deal with that same kind of an approach. He represented Christ. He taught what Christ did and he gave some similar instructions. It's found over in the context of Galatians 6. We know there that in the beginning of Galatians 6, it's talking about going to a person in a spirit of meekness, in the right kind of an attitude, the right kind of an approach. But in Galatians 6 beginning in verse 1, again from the New King James:

***Galatians 6:1. Brethren, if a man... (NKJ)***

Or a woman, we can put that in there.

***Galatians 6:1b. ...is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness,... (NKJ)***

Or meekness, as some translations will say.

***Galatians 6:1 continued. ...considering yourself lest you also be tempted. (NKJ)***

We have to note here that Paul isn't talking to the ministry, correcting or helping someone. He's talking to the brethren, "you, who are spiritual." Because, as we'll see here in a little bit, there is a situation going on in the Galatian church here.

John kind of touched on it a little bit, and I'm sure he will when he does his sermon on fruits... In a few weeks? Yeah, in a few weeks. Anyhow, chapter 5 of Galatians just talked, the context here, it talks about the carnal nature (the works of the flesh) and the spiritual nature. It just talked about that because those fruits can only come by applying God's spirit to whatever situation it is in our lives, in someone else's life. And, again, there in that account in John 8 of the woman taken in adultery, with the Scribes and the Pharisees we see human nature at its worst, that murderous heart of those Pharisees and the godly nature of Christ and His compassion for that woman. We see two contrasting approaches and attitudes there.

But why is Paul even bringing this up here in Galatians? We can kind of back up in Galatians and get a little bit of a picture of what is going on here. I think we'll see some parallels to maybe some rock throwing today that we've seen in our time because nature hasn't changed. Human nature never changes. We can always depend on that, unfortunately, whatever the case may be. But back in Galatians 5 (and again, I'm sure John's going to cover this), it talks about in Galatians 5:22-26, fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, etc. But in verse 23, continuing with that discourse:

***Galatians 5:23. ... gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.***

24) *And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

25) *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk [or conduct ourselves] in the Spirit.*

26) *Let us not...* (NKJ)

And here's getting to the point, a part of the issue, the things that are going on in the Galatian church and that has also gone on in the Churches of God today.

***Galatians 5:26.*** *Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.* (NKJ)

And just doing that (provoking and envying one another) talks about competing with one another. It's an exercise in vanity is what it is. That's what they were evidently doing because that's why Paul is addressing that here. When you look, when you analyze it, he's teaching the same approach that Christ did. We saw that example in the woman taken in adultery. It's the same attitude and approach.

Verse 26 where it says, "[Don't] become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another," he's actually picking up from verse 15 of Galatians 5 where it says:

***Galatians 5:15.*** *But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!* (NKJ)

And the Greek word "devour" there just means destroy one another just like a fire destroys a forest. Some people will just keep throwing wood on that fire because they won't let go of differences. There are endless arguments and the verbal stones do fly. We've seen that.

Just thinking about that it kind of reminds you a little bit, and this is another reference scripture, in James chapter 3. That chapter, if you have little headings like my New King James does, the heading there is *The Untamable Tongue*. Also remember in James the beginning of chapter 4 where James says: "Why do you have wars and fights among you?" He's talking to the Church of God! But in James 3, and, again, these are a couple of reference scriptures. James 3 verses 5 and 6 where it says:

***James 3:5.*** *Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!* (KJV)

Again, a spark ignites it and people run with it. It consumes everything. It consumes the right kind of emotions, the right kind of approaches and attitudes that we should have amongst one another, but verse 6 of James 3:

***James 3:6.*** *And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.* (NKJ)

It means the unruly tongue can corrupt your life and the membership within the church. And, actually, it's pointing to Satan here because remember what it says in 1 Peter 5:8? Satan goes around seeking who he may **devour**. And that word there just means consume, just swallow up. In some cases, that could be referring to our attitude, the way we deal with one another in relationships and all that.

So, again, we can see what's going on here with these Galatians. This insidious attitude of superiority was having an adverse affect in that church. It tells us that actually back in the beginning of this epistle. Galatians 1, if you would, turn back there, beginning in verse 6 of Galatians 1. And we've heard this explained, expounded different ways through the years, but just from this point of view, verse 6 of Galatians 1:

**Galatians 1:6.** *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7) which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. (NKJ)*

And, again, here are these same individuals cropping up. Some commentators will say these individuals that it's talking about here are a mixture of Gnosticism and Judaism. But you can go down through and see in Galatians, it's predominately going to be the Jews that are doing this. The same people, the same mentality is the point is operating in this church.

**Galatians 1:8.** *But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. (NKJ)*

And it gives the double curse here. Going on down to verse 10, Paul starts to tell on himself. He had the same attitude and approach that these Pharisees did because remember his history where he came from. Verse 10:

**Galatians 1:10.** *For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? ... (NKJ)*

Which he did when he cold-bloodedly persecuted the Church of God—and no doubt, he impressed his superiors by doing that (in that Pharisaical hierarchy).

But continuing verse 10:

**Galatians 1:10b.** *... For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. 11) But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me [which he now preaches] is not according to man. (NKJ)*

It's not out of Judaism.

**Galatians 1:12.** *For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. (NKJ)*

It was not legalistic Judaism, which is what the Pharisees practiced.

**Galatians 1:13.** *For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, ... (NKJ)*

And that's with all of its mentality.

**Galatians 1:13b.** *...how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. (NKJ)*

See! He once stood in their shoes. He knew exactly what their attitude and their approach was to everything—all that arrogance, all that superior attitude and approach that they took to everything. And he was killing people, causing them to be killed. When Stephen was stoned, he [Paul] held the coats of those who were stoning Stephen. You see that in Acts, but verse 14 here.

**Galatians 1:14.** *And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly [jealous] for the traditions of my fathers. (NKJ)*

And if you look at a lot of religions where it's heavy on tradition, new converts are usually more zealous than some of the people that started that in the first place. You may have to think about that one a little bit, but it's true.

So, evidently here what is going on in this Galatians church is the situation that some were being influenced by these people to revert back to Old Testament administration of the law—all the ordinances, etc. And that included stoning. The idea being encouraged there was that you could actually become more righteous by doing that. You could earn salvation by strict law keeping. That's what they taught.

But back to Galatians 5 verse 1, we'll see a little bit more of this. Galatians 5:1.

**Galatians 5:1.** *Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. (NKJ)*

And that's what they did to the law. They added the dos and don'ts. That's exactly what they did. Verse 2:

**Galatians 5:2.** *Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, ... (NKJ)*

That's one of the ordinances of the Old Testament. Right—law keeping?

**Galatians 5:2b.** ... Christ will profit you nothing.

3) And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. (NKJ)

If you've done that, fine. But that's not an end in itself. No more than law keeping, in and of itself, is not an end in itself. There is no cause to be all self-righteous about that. Just do the rest. Do the spiritual intent too. Verse 4:

**Galatians 5:4.** You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. (NKJ)

And the Greek there for "estranged" just means you become useless to Christ. That term just means severed or alienated, and from Christ. That was due to their approach, their supposed law keeping, which they thought was very righteous. Actually, Christ said they didn't really do that. Remember? They neglected the weightier matters of the law. They tithed on and did every little detail of law keeping but they didn't really keep it. Their heart wasn't really in it.

But you'll notice in here too that Paul never says that the law is not important. He **never** says that. It was just the way and the approach that they had to it. We can see a little bit of that, again this is a reference, although we're close here. Over in the next chapter of Galatians, chapter 6 verses 12 and 13 where it says:

**Galatians 6:12.** As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, ... (NKJ)

That identifies who the people are here.

**Galatians 6:12b.** ...only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. (NKJ)

In other words, they didn't really want to keep the letter and the spirit of the law. They promoted just a physical law keeping was all that was necessary, plus all the dos and don'ts. Verse 13 of Galatians 6:

**Galatians 6:13.** For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, ... (NKJ)

And, again, Christ said they didn't. Not really, not from the heart.

**Galatians 6:13b.** ...but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. (NKJ)

[That] elevated them and their self-righteous superior approach and attitude.

But back to Galatians 5 and verse 5.

**Galatians 5:5.** *For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. (NKJ)*

Not by just keeping the letter of the law. Verse 6:

**Galatians 5:6.** *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. (NKJ)*

So, Paul there, again, he's reflecting Christ's example in the instruction he's giving about our attitude and our approach. As John said, these are some of the things we need to think about as we're coming up on the Passover because we can very easily fool ourselves, very easily.

But let's go back to Galatians 6 or on to Galatians 6. Hopefully, you're still in Galatians if you're following along. Galatians 6, I know we read this earlier, verse 1, but I'd like to go down through and just break this down some, again, leading to the point here. Galatians 6:1.

**Galatians 6:1.** *Brethren, if a man [or woman] is overtaken... (NKJ)*

Or "caught by a brother or sister in the faith" is what it's saying.

**Galatians 6:1b.** *...in any trespass [or sin], you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, (NKJ)*

The Greek for that word "restore" there is a medical [term]. It means there is something broken in the body that needs fixed. That's what it's talking about and it's talking about that members can help fix the broken parts of the body. That could be an encouragement—however you want to look at that and however that can be applied. It's akin to fixing a broken bone, part of the body is broken and needs fixing.

And when you think about that in "a spirit of gentleness," that's just the opposite of a spirit or an air of pompous superiority telling someone they have a problem.

Finishing up that verse:

**Galatians 6:1 continued.** *...considering yourself lest you also be tempted. (NKJ)*

Again, like we talked about earlier, superior-thinking people are full of pride. They kind of see themselves as having some kind of a spiritual Kevlar. They can't be affected by the same things the rest of us unwashed masses can. That was their whole approach. They thought they were above the temptations that the rest of us had. But Christ, as we saw there in that example in John 8, cut right through that very hard, carnal armor of their hearts. Verse 2:

**Galatians 6:2.** *Bear one another's burdens, ... (NKJ)*

This kind of means: Put yourselves in another's shoes, maybe help with the problem. Not an attitude of punishing the person, "You've done the sin. You need to be punished for that." But going on in that verse there, it says ...well, back up.

**Galatians 6:2.** *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.  
3) For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. (NKJ)*

We can see here and what does it say in verse 7 of this same chapter? Whatever a man sows, he's going to reap. Sometimes we're not really aware until something hammers us a little bit to wake us up to something that we're doing wrong.

Let's go down to verse 4.

**Galatians 6:4.** *But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. (NKJ)*

And if we do that self-examination correctly, we'll give God the Father and Jesus Christ the credit for the right approach and the attitude that we do have when we do find ourselves doing something correctly. We don't invent those things. We don't come up with them by ourselves. God's spirit is working in us. Personally, I think we can be very, very thankful of the patience that They have with us.

Verse 5:

**Galatians 6:5.** *For each one shall bear his own load. (NKJ)*

You're going to be judged on your individual basis, on individual behavior. I kind of like the Amplified of this. Galatians 6:1-5 in the Amplified says:

**Galatians 6:1.** Brethren, if any person is overtaken in misconduct *or* sin of any sort, you who are spiritual {or led} [by the Spirit] should set him right *and* restore *and* reinstate him, without any sense of superiority and with all gentleness, keeping an attentive eye on yourself, lest you should be tempted also.

2) Bear (endure, {or help} carry) one another's burdens *and* troublesome moral faults, and in this way fulfill *and* observe perfectly the law of Christ (the Messiah) *and* complete what is lacking [in your obedience to it]. (AMP)

That is, "work on yourself" is what this translation is saying because we all have shortcomings too—every one of us.

**Galatians 6:3.** For if any person thinks himself to be somebody {in other words} [too important {to help with another person}] when he is nobody [... except in his own estimation], he deceives and deludes and cheats himself. (AMP)

And again, like these Pharisees [are] blind to their own problems!

**Galatians 6:4.** But let every person carefully scrutinize *and* examine *and* test his own conduct and his own work. He can then have the personal satisfaction *and* joy of doing something commendable... (AMP)

It goes on there, but verse 5:

**Galatians 6:5.** For every person will have to bear ... his own ... {faults, his own} load.... (AMP)

The point Paul was making there in telling these Galatians folks that is if they're genuinely concerned with the situation, then they'll approach it with the right attitude and the right spirit of gentleness and meekness, because, if you don't, you're not really helping. You're harming the situation.

But too often what happens when somebody sets out to help other people, too often, and if we don't do it in that spirit of meekness and that right approach, that right attitude, a person gets to thinking they're something special, they can help someone, because they're doing everything right.

What does it say in Philippians 2:3? Esteem others better than yourself. A lot of times it doesn't really work that way. It works just the opposite. It's kind of an exercise in ego. People will come along saying, "It's really good for these folks that they have me around because I've really got my act together and I'm sure I can straighten them out."

This actually happened to us years ago. Well, not to me especially, but it did to Marie. And, again, I know you've heard this to the point where you're tired of it, but when we came into the Church, we had to separate for the D and R thing. Anyhow, she was in the Pasco Church by herself. And, of course, we still had kids at home at that time, teenagers. And one of the ladies in the congregation took it upon herself to be the—I'm not sure what you would want to call it. It wouldn't be the nanny.

She was actually giving unsolicited advice on child-rearing to Marie. That's something with Marie you don't really want to do. We had six kids. She knew a little bit about the problems and things with the kids, but this individual kept doing this. This lady is gone now and I won't name any names. No one here even knows of the situation, but as it turned out her kids didn't turn out so great either.



That's just an example of that, but that's an approach. And she didn't mean any harm by doing that, but it's just the way it came across. It wasn't in a spirit of meekness. But, again, what Paul is saying here is there is a difference in helping people by following Christ's law of love, His approach, and that superior attitude demonstrated by the Scribes and the Pharisees. That's the whole lesson here.

We read there in Galatians 6 where it says, prove or change yourself first. I heard a minister say one time that one of the first laws in pre-marital counseling was "Don't try to change the other person." And that's actually pretty good advice because most of us try to do that if we haven't had the correct counseling and all that.

The same thing applies to other people. You have to think about that a little bit because, if we're trying to help someone and we're trying to change them if that's done correctly in a spirit of meekness and with God's spirit, God's love, and a good intent there, whose image are you trying to change them into? Yours? Like Paul was saying there, if we all have to bear our own load and everything, we'll be responsible in the judgment for the things that we have done. They might be standing there with us if we change them into being just like us. Do you see the point there? Another example is if you have marriage problems, how can you help someone that just needs a little encouragement in theirs?

**So, again, to summarize these lessons and these two approaches, we have that first lesson: Don't take the same approach and the attitude these Scribes and Pharisees did here in John 8.**

Don't throw stones at other sinners, which is nothing more than this superior attitude, this approach. Don't say, "They just need punished." We can help them if we can. We can't take the attitude, "Well, they deserve to be stoned."

What was the old advertisement or maybe it came from a movie or something, "Just hang him, it'll teach him a lesson." Remember that one? That's not going to help anybody. Not going to help him at all.

**And the second lesson, there again to summarize was: Christ's attitude and approach.**

John touched on that just a little in the sermonette because His approach was basically when He told her to "Go and sin no more" was to repent because Christ knew that repentance brings peace. It brings that peace between the individual and God. And He knew, Christ knew that the solution was for her to recognize her sin and to change her life.

We always have to remember 2 Peter 3 verse 9 if we think about, "Well, let's just punish people. Let's just kill them all." 2 Peter 3:9 says:

**2 Peter 3:9.** *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, ... (NKJ)*

And His promise is not about punishment; it's about salvation.

**2 Peter 3:9b.** *...as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (NKJ)*

That's what God wants. That's what Christ wanted.

But, again, it's unfortunate with some people when they try to help someone, they're really trying to make themselves feel better and to look better to other people that they're trying to impress. That's what these Pharisees and what these Scribes were doing. That was what it was all about. They were trying to trip Christ up, of course, in the process but they were way out matched there.

Again, isn't it much better if a person is helped in their life to understand what sin is doing to them, repenting and establishing a relationship with God? And that will bring the blessings and the peace in their life that they really need. We can see an example of that too. Let's [go to] just a couple of quick scriptures over in Proverbs 6. Remember these guys thought they were fooling Christ, but He knew all of this. He knew all of this. In fact, He inspired Solomon for these things.

Back over in Proverbs 6 beginning in verse 16. Remember here are the six—no seven—things that God hates. Verse 16 of Proverbs 6:

**Proverbs 6:16.** *These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:*

*17) A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood,*

*18) A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil,*

*19) A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren. (NKJ)*

When you think about that, the Pharisees were guilty of every one of those—every one of those!

Let's continue in Proverbs 6:20.

**Proverbs 6:20.** *My son, keep your father's command, ... (NKJ)*

I know there is a physical and a spiritual side to this.

**Proverbs 6:20b.** *...and do not forsake the law of your mother. (NKJ)*

Again, he's giving advice on how to live your life. God's law brings peace and it protects your life. That's what the young are being taught; that's what Solomon is teaching. Verse 21:

**Proverbs 6:21.** *Bind them continually upon your heart; Tie them around your neck. (NKJ)*

Just like something you wear. Your behavior and your conduct is like something you put on and wear every day like an ornament. Verse 22:

**Proverbs 6:22.** *When you roam, ... (NKJ)*

Which just means: wherever you go in your life.

**Proverbs 6:22b.** *...they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you. (NKJ)*

In other words, speak to your conscience in your heart, guiding you like a lamp gives light in the darkness, which it goes on to say here in verse 23.

**Proverbs 6:23.** *For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the [or a] way of life,  
24) To keep you from the evil woman, from the flattering tongue of a seductress. (NKJ)*

You can be seduced into breaking God's law. Seduced, I'm sorry, seduced into breaking God's law. I'll get the grammar right there. Verse 25:

**Proverbs 6:25.** *Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids. (NKJ)*

This kind of reminds of what James said when he talked about the lusts and all that. This again, just a reference scripture, but in James 1:14 it says:

**James 1:14.** *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust,  
15) Then when [the] lust [has] conceived, it [brings] forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, [brings] forth death. (KJV)*

The point is it takes place in the mind first. And that is what God is interested in—changing us from the inside out. Right? Like John was referring to a little bit. That's what God wants.

I read this cute little story here a while back about the balloon salesman that was on the streets of New York. He was peddling balloons. And every once in a while, he would let one go just to draw a little bit of attention, draw in some customers. He let a red one go, and a yellow one go, a blue one go. He felt a little tug at his arm. He looked down and there was little colored boy. He asked him, "Sir, if you let a black one go, will it go up in the air?" And, of course, the guy he knows what's going on.

Very compassionate, he looks at him and says, "Son, it's what's inside the balloon that makes it go up." That's a cute story.

Again, continuing here in Proverbs 6:26.

**Proverbs 6:26.** *For by means of a harlot a man is reduced to a crust of bread; and an adulteress will prey upon his precious life.  
27) Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? (NKJ)*

You can't snuggle up to a fire. You're going to be toast! Verse 28:

**Proverbs 5:28.** *Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be seared?  
29) So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; whoever touches her shall not be innocent. (NKJ)*

It's talking about adultery there.

Let's jump down to verse 32.

**Proverbs 6:32.** *Whoever commits adultery with a woman [or a woman with a man] lacks understanding; he [or she] who does so destroys his [or her] own soul. (NKJ)*

Just think about that for a second there, "lacks understanding." [That person] doesn't realize the harm that is being done by that act; doesn't realize the other people that may be hurt by that, the other spouse, the other family. Divorces happen. Families are affected. The parents are affected. Kids are certainly affected. They suffer the shame. They suffer the heartbreak and everything connected with that. [That person] "Destroys his own soul" is what it says here because of the physical and the spiritual pain that that guilt causes. You know "reduced to a crust of bread." We would say a crumb, reduced to a crumb.

Example: I knew a man one time that bragged to me about actually he seduced this woman. I knew her too. She was married. He was married. He talked her into this affair. And he bragged about it and, of course, he wanted to continue the affair, but she didn't. Again, he told me her reaction. She said she was sitting at home one night. She said she was looking at her husband and the kids. They were all watching TV. And she said she just felt terrible. She felt crummy. She was reduced to that piece of bread, that crumb of that bread.

Again there, the point is the hurt and the pain that caused, plus living with that regret. And, of course, she broke it off.

But, again, getting back to what we were talking about here. If we're really going to help someone and we're limited to what we can do now but one of these days we're going to actually be in a position to help people. And what is our approach and what

is our attitude going to be? Is it going to be will we say, “What does the law demand?” if someone has committed something? Or “How can the law punish this person?” Or, “How can we teach them to face as many consequences as possible through the law so that they’ll obey God after that? Again, that’s a little take on “Hang them. It’ll teach them a lesson.”

Think back to Christ’s example to help this lady understand how not to hurt herself—or others actually—and for her to have more self-respect so she wouldn’t do that again. That was His approach with her. Isn’t that better than some religious leader, the Scribes and the Pharisees, the example we have here?

And we can have the same kind of an attitude today. Is someone just trying to make some mileage in their status with their peers by looking down on her and saying in a very cold-blooded way, “You know, well, the law says to stone her. So we’ll stone her. We’ll kill her. That’s what we’ll do.”

And, again, we don’t know the full facts of the account there in John 8 about that woman. Maybe she was doing it out of need. Maybe she was hungry. We don’t know. But Christ’s approach was to help her have more self-respect so that she wouldn’t do that again. He was more concerned about helping her so that she wouldn’t get into the tragedy of sin. It can happen. We see that in the Proverbs there. And His desire was to help her to understand God’s law—something that can make her or anyone happy actually, if we practice those things as opposed to just being punished by the law.

If people with that kind of an attitude and unfortunately I think sometimes we might slip into that kind of a superior attitude with a tendency to see everything black and white. That’s what these individuals were doing. We have to... Being a redneck—I know people are saying, “We’d have never guessed that, Jack!” What do us rednecks believe in? We believe in guns, capital punishment, low taxes and the constitution. That’s what we basically believe in, but when we’re converted, we need to move away from that emotionalism that’s involved in that because that’s not the right kind of an approach and the attitude to have.

Again, we have to think, on the other hand, how many people in God’s church (and some of us have been guilty of this, too) have the mentality that we have all this information; we have all this wonderful truth, we have all of God’s law and we understand it so well, we just can’t wait till we can apply this to the whole world. We’re going to show them how special we are, and a lot of that has to do with punishing. But, again, wouldn’t the right approach, wouldn’t the better approach be to help people to understand what sin does and to help them to change their lives?

Here’s a few scriptures that we need to remember. Over in 1 John 1, the context here is talking about the basis for fellowship with Christ. That’s what it’s talking about in 1 John 1 beginning in verse 5. Again, this is from the New King James.

**1 John 1:5.** *This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*

*6) If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (NKJ)*

Were those Pharisees and Sadducees practicing the truth? No, they were liars and they were full of hate. Verse 7:

**1 John 1:7.** *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. (NKJ)*

And we're going to talk about that more in the weeks coming. Verse 8:

**1 John 1:8.** *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (NKJ)*

That points to the fact that we're really no better than anyone else. No matter how special we think we are, we're really no better. We're not superior.

Do you remember the example of the Canaanite woman found in Matthew 15 where the woman came to Him? She came to Christ and she said her daughter was demon possessed and she wanted her healed. And Christ didn't say anything. Again, this is one of these really interesting things where (because the disciples were there and He's teaching them a lesson), He didn't answer this woman. So, the disciples said, "Get her out of here! She's a Canaanite. And she's a woman! Let's get her out of here. She's kind of bothering us."

So, Christ kind of answered her, and He said that He was just sent to the House of Israel. She asked him, "Well, Lord help me." She's begging Him again. And He tells her, "It's not really appropriate to Me to give the children's bread (which meant His message and everything for the Israelites) to the dogs," the little dogs actually, if you look at some translations. And she says, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs from the master's table." And her daughter was healed from that hour on.

But look at the lesson that He taught there; compassion for this woman who those people actually looked on as dogs. That's the way they viewed those Canaanite people. But He taught them compassion there for just another human being.

Going on here in verse 9 of 1 John:

**1 John 1:9.** *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (NKJ)*

That lets us know where we are in our relationship with God.

The point there again is wouldn't it be better, given the opportunity and given the right attitude, given the right approach which comes through God's spirit (It's actually one of the fruits of God's spirit), wouldn't it be better rather than to punish people, which euphemistically we can say "Stone them," wouldn't it be better to encourage people to confess their sins, not to us but to God, and to change their lives that they could receive the forgiveness they needed? And then they could have that peace in their lives. And wouldn't it be better to help people draw close to God, to draw close to Christ, to get rid of the unrighteousness and move more and more towards God and Jesus Christ's character and righteousness? And wouldn't it be better if we could help people find that peace and be so much better than just dropping the hammer on people? It would be so much better.

I haven't seen it yet, but I believe Harold gave a sermon recently on being teachers. We're going to do that in the World Tomorrow. What kind of an approach, an attitude, are we going to have? Are we going to teach God's law and all the punishment that goes with that? Or are we going to teach how to overcome that, how to overcome sin and live a life as God intended?

Do you see the whole point of the lessons there? Just looking at that account there in John 8 of the woman taken in adultery and Christ's approach—which is the approach we want. We don't want the approach that those Pharisees, that those Sadducees had.

And, yes, there is going to be some ultimate punishment. Some people are not going to be saved. But, again, just look at those incredible lessons that Christ taught there. He was much more interested in helping people than He was in stoning them or in punishing them. He wanted to change people from the inside out and help them with their attitude and their lives, [to be] just like His attitude and His life were like, which is what we strive for.

So, that shows us what our attitude and our approach should be. And it shows us that someday, if we change, when we're changed, when people look to us and we really truly can help them understand and overcome sin in their lives, when people look at us and see that same kind of an attitude and that same kind of approach and, most importantly, when they can hear us say, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."