

Equality: The Original Justification for Sin

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Brethren, all of us here in the Church of God over the past week have kept the Festival of Unleavened Bread. And we keep this festival not only because it is commanded by God for us to keep it, but also because it teaches us some very valuable lessons. One of the things that we learn from these holy days is that we can look at the nature of leavening and how it affects bread and learn some valuable lessons about the nature of sin and how it can affect us in our personal lives.

In fact, generally speaking, you might say that there are two major ways that bread can become leavened. One of them is by purposely taking action to leavened it. In other words, if you're setting out to back some bread and you're making the dough and adding the various ingredients, at some point in the process you're going to take some yeast or some baking powder or some type of leavening agent and purposely put it in your dough because you want it to be leavened, you want it to rise.

There's another way that bread can be leavened as well. And that's be simply not taking action to prevent it. You can make some dough and leave it exposed to the air and the yeast spores that just naturally occur in the air, if you give it a little time, will get into that bread. And if you give it a little more time, those yeast spores are going to reproduce and leaven the entire batch of dough and you never took any action to knowingly leaven it. You just simply didn't take any action to prevent it.

We're going to build off this second concept of simply not taking action to prevent leavening from occurring. To establish the foundation, turn to 1 Corinthians 5. I first want to give you a little background as to the culture of Corinth. It's very important to understand what's actually taking place here.

In the area of Corinth, the culture was very extant with sexual immorality. It was a very pagan area and they had lots of pagan temples. If you've ever studied into pagan religions, sex is always a very significant part of those religions. It's oftentimes looked at as an act of worship. That was true in Corinth. It was common to have temple prostitutes that worked out of the temples. In their belief system, it was considered an act of worship for someone to go to the temple and have sex with a temple prostitute there.

As you can imagine, this being a very popular part of the culture there, it affected the environment that the church in Corinth lived in. It was part of the everyday life, the thought processes of the culture they lived in.

What's happening in 1 Corinthians is that Paul is correcting the Corinthian church for how they were handling a situation that involved sexual immorality within the congregation.

1 Corinthians 5:1. *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! (NKJV)*

There was a guy in the congregation who was having an affair with his step-mother and it was known amongst the congregation. Notice how the congregation was responding to this.

- 2) *And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.*
- 3) *For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) [concerning] him who has so done this deed.*
- 4) *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
- 5) *deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*
- 6) *Your glorying is not good. ... (NKJV)*

Notice what's happening here is that they are having a very tolerant attitude. Today we use that term a lot, to be tolerant. That's what the congregation was doing here. It was openly known that he was engaged in this behavior. But the people, I'm sure in many cases, did not approve of his behavior but were being very accepting and tolerant of it with him being part of the congregation. And Paul is correcting them for this telling them this was not good. "You shouldn't be doing this. You shouldn't be allowing this influence in the congregation." The people in Corinth were literally proud of the fact of how open-minded and how tolerant they were. Because he says, "Your glorifying is not good." They were actually proud of this.

But notice the logic behind Paul saying this:

- 6) *...Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*
- 7) *Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.*
- 8) *Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*
(NKJV)

What he's saying is that a little leaven leavens the whole lump. He's playing off the analogy I started off with how you can make dough and simply just not prevent it from being leavened. In other words, you didn't actively put leavening in it. You just exposed it to an environment that would leaven it and didn't stop it from happening. That's basically what he's getting at here. He's saying, "You're allowing this person with a blatantly sinful lifestyle to be a part of the congregation and it's openly known that he's doing this." This is condoning of sin and making it seem not so bad, and more acceptable. But over time, it will pervert the thinking of the people.

I'm sure most of the people there were not thinking that they would go have affairs with their step-moms. It wasn't a matter of them jumping straight to follow that example. His point was by allowing this, they were making it seem okay and not so bad. So now people start justifying more and more behavior and they start heading in that direction. That is what he meant by saying that a little leaven leavens the whole lump.

In this sermon we're going to look at two different philosophies that are extant in our culture today that is similar to how the environment of Corinth affected the thinking of the congregation. We're going to look at two philosophies that leaven our culture, that are very pervasive throughout our culture, our education system, our entertainment, and even our government. It broadcasts messages at us constantly that we may not even be aware of if we're not paying attention to it. It winds up leavening our environment and if we're not actively protecting our minds to not fall into these philosophies, they wind up leavening us and corrupting our thinking.

These two particular philosophies have one thing in common – and that is the justification that puts a good face upon them. It not only makes them seem harmless, but makes them seem good. It's the argument of equality.

That's a phrase that you'll hear often in our culture today. It's all about equality. If you pay closer attention oftentimes to the behavior that's being justified with that argument, it's very sinful behavior and outright rebellious to God's law. It's justified in the name of equality.

We're going to look at that in detail as we go through this sermon. But first I want you to look at this argument of equality. It is not new. It is not a 21st century phenomenon. It has been used as the justification for sin from the very first documented case of sin that we have in the Bible. The argument has been around from the very beginning of sin. If you'd like a title for this sermon, its

Equality: The Original Justification for Sin

This idea of equality being a smoke screen to put a good face on sin is not a new idea at all. In Isaiah 14 we see one of the earliest documented situations of sin from the very individual who introduced the whole concept of sin because this is even before mankind existed. What's being discussed here is Satan the devil. He was originally created as an archangel to serve at God's throne and was created for very positive purposes. God didn't originally intend for him to become the evil villain that he is today. But let's notice how the transition took place and most importantly, in his internal dialog, how he justified his actions in his own head.

Isaiah 14:12. "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!
13) For you have said in your heart: ... (NKJV)

Notice this is what he said in his own heart, his internal dialog, his thought process that he's thinking in his head of how he justifies his actions.

*13b) ...'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north;
14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'*
(NKJV)

In other words, "I will also have my throne where God is. I'll be just like God. I'll be equal with Him." It's all about equality. I'm sure in his own mind he justified himself as being just as capable of ruling the universe as God was and that he equally deserved to have the right to have his throne just like God's. His thought process was that he would also have his throne just where God's was. He would be just like God.

In his mind, this was all about equality and God was holding him down. "He's trying to cheat me out of my rightful place for equality." This is the logic of what he's doing. But think about what's happening here. It's not about equality here, it's about rebellion. He has no right to be equal with God. He's God's creation. God never promised the angels the chance to be God beings and to have an equal status with God. So there is no justification for Satan to be in an equal status with God. This is simply about rebellion.

This whole idea of equality makes it sound like, "I just want equality and fairness." Doesn't that sound so positive? Like who would be against equality and fairness? But in reality it's just a justification for rebellion.

Turn with me to Genesis chapter 3 and we'll see that this just isn't the argument that Satan used to justify his own behavior. It's exactly the same argument he used to market sin to the first humans.

Genesis 3:1. *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"* (NKJV)

Notice how he's starting off the argument. Obviously he knows this isn't true. God didn't deny them access to everything in the garden. God presented them with one rule. He told them there was a tree of good and evil in the midst of the garden and leave that one alone. Everything else is yours. You can enjoy this paradise. Everything else is yours to do with as you want. I have one rule. Leave that one tree alone. It's off limits.

Notice how Satan formed the argument. He starts off with Eve asking her if she was being mistreated; if God was withholding the good stuff from her; if God was trying to hold her down. He's trying to put across the idea that she was being victimized and mistreated. He's planting that thought into her mind.

2) *And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;*

3) *but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' "* (NKJV)

So she's pointing out what the real story is by saying that God told them they could have everything else, but just this one they could not have. Notice how he follows up with this.

4) *Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.*

5) *For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

Notice that last phrase: "You'll be just like God. You'll have the same knowledge, the same understanding that God does." Doesn't that sound similar to, "I will be like the most high. I'll be equal with God." Because that's basically what he's telling her. He's basically saying that if she eats this fruit, she'd be just as smart as God is. "You'll be just as capable as He is. He's just trying to hold you down, withhold this from you. He's victimizing you. So what you need to do is assert your rightful place to be equal with Him. You eat this fruit, you'll be as smart as Him and you won't need God anymore. You won't have Him holding you down." That's basically the argument he's presenting her with. He's basically forming this as it's all about equality and she was being cheated out of equality and if she would just step up and take her equal place, she'd be equal with God.

But in reality, notice that this is not about equality, it's about rebellion. God wasn't mistreating them. He gave them all these good things and set one rule, and they want to break that one rule. But phrasing it in the context of equality puts a good face on it. Makes it sound good and acceptable, like a good idea. Who would be against equality and fairness?

Both of the philosophies that I mentioned here today get marketed in our culture under the name of equality. As we examine them closely, we will see that they are not about equality. They are about rebellion and totally turning against everything that God teaches and trying to do the opposite. They are very much insidious evils. They very much leaven our culture if we examine them in detail and look beyond this facade of equality.

The first philosophy I'd like to take a look at today is the philosophy of multiculturalism. This is something that is very extant in our culture. It's in our educational systems. Our universities are very steeped in this idea. Our politics, our education, our entertainment, it's all throughout our culture.

The idea of multiculturalism is generally put across like this: It's the idea that all cultures, all religions, and all viewpoints are equal. It's all equal and we should openly

embrace and accept all of them with the same enthusiasm and none are inherently better than the other. And it's put across as if it's the solution to racism. If you look not only in our world today, but throughout world history, it's not hard to find lots of examples of racial strife, racial tension, of wars that have been fought in regards to racism where one group is seeing another group as inferior and they're fighting over that.

So this idea is put across if we would just stop looking at anybody's belief system as being superior to the other, couldn't we all just get along and have this group hug philosophy with each other. Doesn't that sound great? Well, let me read to you a quote specifically mentioning this because before this philosophy became extant in the United States, Europe had already embraced it. Let me share with you how this has gone over in Europe.

The quote I'm going to read to you I took off of the NBC News website. It was published on February 6, 2011. It's entitled "Multiculturalism Has Failed" and they start off quoting David Cameron, the Prime Minister of Britain.

Prime Minister David Cameron, in a speech attended by world leaders on Saturday, criticized his country's longstanding policy of multiculturalism saying it was an outright failure and partly to blame for fostering Islamic extremism. He said the UK needs a stronger national identity to prevent people from turning to extremism. "If we are to defeat this threat, I believe it is time to turn the page on the failed policies of the past" he told an international conference in Munich. "Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives apart from each other and the mainstream." Cameron said during a panel discussion attended by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, "We have failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong." He says the hands-off tolerance in Britain and other European nations has encouraged Muslims and other immigrant groups to live separate lives apart from each other and the mainstream.

This is just one European leader but this is not the first one that has come out and publically stated this philosophy they thought was going to be so wonderful has really turned out to be the opposite. They thought it was the solution to solving problems but it's turned out that it created even greater problems and more tension and more strife.

Let's ask the question: Why is that? Why does a philosophy that seems so positive on the surface, like it would solve a lot of problems, turn out to do the exact opposite? The reason is that it's based upon a very flawed foundation. As I mentioned, the idea is that all cultures, all religions, all viewpoints, are all equal and nothing is inherently better than the other. That sounds positive to begin with, but think about what that's saying.

If you say that all religions are equal and there are none that are inherently superior to the other, what that means is that Christianity and Buddhism and Islam and even Satanism are all equal. They are all equally valid and there is none inherently better

than the other. It's all based upon the idea of moral relativism. What moral relativism says is there basically is no absolute truth. It's just my opinion and your opinion and somebody else's opinion and they are all equally valid and there is not one inherently better than the other.

Well now we've thrown out the concept that there even is such a thing as absolute truth or solid moral grounds that we should guide our lives by. We've thrown out the idea that God's word and truth is something that we should follow. We've thrown out the very concept of sin because if there is no absolute truth, there is no sin. There is no law of God that you can violate; there's nothing to repent of. Do you see where this is headed? We now just started embracing any kind of idea.

Let's notice some few foundational scriptures that will teach us why this idea is so inherently bad.

Jeremiah 17:5. *Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD.*

6) For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land which is not inhabited. (NKJV)

He's saying if we just rely upon ourselves, our own thinking, we naturally tend to go in the wrong direction because we don't see when good comes. The good choices can be right in front of us and we'd be blind and not even realize it.

7) "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD.

8) For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit. (NKJV)

He's saying that depending upon God's wisdom and His direction for us, that's what leads us in the right direction. So why do we always tend to go wrong if we rely upon ourselves?

9) "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?

10) I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. (NKJV)

He's saying if we depend upon ourselves, our natural mind, our own thinking, and we reject God's wisdom to direct our lives, we will naturally choose the wrong things. We will turn against the good and we will go towards the evil. But the thing is that while we're doing it, we're going to be convinced that we're making the right choices. In our mind we think we have it all figured out and know the right thing to do. We're not thinking that we're choosing the bad choices, we think we're making the right choices.

Proverbs 14:12. *There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. (NKJV)*

In other words, it looks right to us. When we look at it, it looks like the best route to go to me. Seems like it would have the best results. But what we wind up doing is going exactly in the opposite direction because again, if we depend upon ourselves with our judgment, what happens ultimately is in our perception we wind up seeing as good what is actually evil and as evil what is actually good.

We see this described in Isaiah 5.

Isaiah 5:20. *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (NKJV)*

What this is telling us is if we rely upon our own understanding and if we reject the idea that there is such a thing as ultimate truth, that God's word defines for us the right way to live, what will naturally happens is we will wind up going not only in the wrong direction, we will embrace evil thinking it is good and we will turn against God's word. As Romans 8:7 tells us, we're not able to even be subject to God's law because we're naturally hostile to it. We will reject it and push it away thinking the opposite is good.

This is very much what this philosophy of multiculturalism winds up doing. Again, it is often marketed from the standpoint of equality and fairness, because again, that just sounds so positive. Who would be against equality and fairness and giving everyone a fair shot? But if you look closely at how this actually plays out, that's not really the case of how it happens. Let me give you some examples of that.

Back in the mid-90s, I was attending graduate school at the University of North Texas. I was completing a Master's Degree in counseling. As part of the program, I had to take a class called "Counseling the Culturally Different" and basically the subject matter of the class was going through various different cultures and background and religions and understanding where people are coming from, what their belief system was, how they think. It was positive in that regard to understand different backgrounds and where people are coming from, what their history is and such, but a very fundamental philosophy in the whole class was this idea of multiculturalism. It was said from the very beginning that you had to be very open-minded and accepting of everyone's viewpoint. You can't knock anybody's culture because that means you're a racist and narrow-minded.

As the class played out, there were several of us like myself that came from a more conservative Judeo-Christian values point of view who couldn't help but notice as the class played out that there was one huge exception to all of this. Even though the stated philosophy was that we had to be open-minded and embrace every viewpoint, there was a huge exception to that rule. That was anything that was based upon solid Judeo-Christian values. In other words, a value system, a point of view that was based

upon the Bible. That was the one viewpoint that you could knock and it wouldn't really cause a problem. You were not a narrow-minded racist if you knocked that point of view and espoused every other. They basically viewed the Judeo-Christian culture and values as the problem. That was what they wanted to get rid of. So you can see what was happening is calling good evil and evil good.

To further explain this, I'd like to share with you a quote from Dr. Thomas Solwell. You might be familiar with him. He's a famous author in America. He's been a college professor, and is a social and political commentator as well. There's a number of conservative websites out today that have a regular column that he writes. He's written quite a bit on this issue of multiculturalism. This is what he said about this:

What multiculturalism boils down to is that you can praise any culture in the world except Western culture and you cannot blame any culture in the world except Western culture.

So you can see again this same bias. It's all in one direction and there's one exception to all this acceptance; it's anything with Judeo-Christian values. The reason, if you think about it from a global perspective of why it's Western culture that they're targeting, is that these nations are those that we in the Church of God would say have descended from the twelve tribes of Israel.

As a result, if you look at the cultures, especially historically, they tend to be more connected with, you might say, Judeo-Christian values based upon the Bible as compared to the rest of the world. Now, understand, I'm not suggesting by any means that these nations have been faithful in obeying God because we know that's absolutely not the case. But I'm saying that if you look at them, even from a historical perspective, what you'll see is often times the culture, the values that have been passed on, are more closely aligned with the Bible than lots of other cultures are by comparison.

That's where you see Western cultures as being portrayed as what is bad and every other culture is what is good. What this is, is an attack on Judeo-Christian values. This is really not about equality and fairness, this is about rebellion to God and evil. That's really what's behind all of this.

What it often results in is very perverted thinking. Let me give you some examples of that. When we start off in this class, as with other college classes, you define basic terms that you are going to base the rest of the class upon. As the professor was laying the foundation for where we were going, one day she writes on the board: The emotional level of prejudice. Here's how she defined it: The feelings that a minority group causes in a majority group. And I read that definition and I shot my hand up and I immediately challenged it. I said, "M'am, what you're saying here is that by definition minorities are immune to prejudice. You're basically framing this in a way that whites are the only ones who can be bigoted and prejudiced. That's incredibly skewed." She kind of acknowledged that I had a point in that but then double-talked it around and when she finished her response to it she pointed to the board and said, "We're going to

stick to this in this class.” I realized at that point that what we were going to do is switch off our brains, follow a political agenda and we’re going to call that scholarship like we’re educated somehow when really what we were doing was participating in brainwashing. She already acknowledged that this was completely bogus and one-sided.

Later in the class we had an assignment to go out and find some professional research articles in professional journals that had subject matter relevant to the class and write a paper on it. I found two different research articles that were measuring the perception of prejudice. One was specifically focused toward racial discrimination, the other toward sexual discrimination. These studies were conducted at universities with entry level psych students and it was a large test sample that they were working with. They handed out four different packets with scenarios in them. They said person A had this interaction with person B and here’s the details of what took place. The only thing difference in the packets were the photos. They placed photos in them and the photos identified person A and person B by sex and by race, and they moved the photos around in each packet to change all this. But the scenarios, and this is important to understand, were word-for-word, exactly the same. They asked the participants to make judgments about the behavior that they were reading. They were asked: (1) Is the behavior that is being described in this scenario discriminatory? And (2) If so, rate how severe it is. And they gave them a scale to say how bad the behavior was.

What they found from this is that regardless of who was responding, there was a very clear trend. If it was a stereotypical predator acting upon a stereotypical victim, in other words, if it was a white racially discriminating against a non-white, or if it was a man sexually discriminating against a woman, that was rated much more often as being discriminatory and the behavior was rated much more severely than if you took the exact same scenario and reversed it.

You can see what was happening here is they were not actually evaluating the behavior that took place and looking at this from a Biblical perspective of fruits of behavior, it’s being viewed through a political filter in terms of a stereotype in terms of what we expect to see. And when I submitted the paper I was basically trying to illustrate the point to her that when you define things like this, what you’re doing is contributing to this type of viewpoint, where you’re perverting judgment and perceptions of people because they’re not adequately looking at the behavior of what’s happening and making a right judgment. They’re viewing it through preconceived notions and a political filter.

The Bible addresses this for us.

Leviticus 19:15. *'You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. (NKJV)*

What it’s saying is that you should look at the facts of what happened. You should look at their individual behavior and make judgments accordingly. You don’t just assume

who is the good guy and who is the bad guy. Take the scenario described here. Who is our stereotypical predator here and who's our stereotypical victim if we look at it from again, just kind of cultural assumptions? Isn't that normally going to be the rich, powerful bad guy picking on the innocent poor man? Isn't that how we typically tend to look at it? What God is saying here is don't view it from that perspective. You must look at their behavior, the details of what happened and judge it righteously.

Think about the Robin Hood phenomenon. Robin Hood is the good guy because he steals from the rich and gives to the poor. He's a criminal who is stealing from people. But we put him across as the good guy. Why? Because it's all about equality. Well, he's just creating equality. He's taking from the rich and giving to the poor and making it all equal and that makes him the good guy. No, it doesn't. He's a thief. He's a criminal who we've turned into a hero. If you think about it, he's put up as the good guy because it's social justice. We hear that term being thrown around today. What that really means is that we're perverting judgment and justice so we can support a political agenda and we put a good face on it by calling it equality. That's what is really happening here. It perverts judgment. It perverts our thinking. This type of thought process is all throughout our culture today. We constantly get invaded with messages like this.

We have to understand what this winds up doing is really divorcing our thought process from cause and effect because as we're going to see, God's word tells us there is cause and effect in how we go about living our lives. This whole idea of multiculturalism means that we have to view every culture as equal. Every philosophy and way of life is equal and none are inherently better than the other.

This creates some interesting problems. If you look at our world today or even back in history, you find some cultures typically outperform others. Some are more successful consistently over time and others lag behind. How do you explain these disparities? I'd like to share with you another quote from Dr. Thomas Sowell that addresses this.

The multicultural dogma is that we are to celebrate all cultures, not change them. In other words, people who lag educationally or economically are to keep on what they have been doing but somehow have better results in the future than in the past. And if they don't have better results in the future, it's society's fault.

It's politically incorrect to say, "Maybe this value system or this way of life is better than the other because it always results in better outcomes." If you can't say that, how do you explain why this group is always doing better than that one? The only explanation you can come up with then if everything is equal and you're not allowed to think about cause and effect, is the group that's always performing better, they cheated somehow. They've cheated the system. They've oppressed others somehow. That's why they're doing better. And the group that's underperforming, they must be the victim somehow. They've been oppressed and put down because we can't look at fruits of behavior. We can't look at their actions and say that maybe they should be doing something differently.

This goes directly against what God teaches us.

Galatians 6:7. *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*

8) *For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. (NKJV)*

The principle that God teaches here is that there is cause and effect. If we have good actions, generally speaking we'll have better results. If we make bad choices, we'll get bad results.

If you look at our culture today, very often people don't look at it from that standpoint. If they get bad results, they see themselves as victims. Just watch daytime talk shows. Understand I'm not recommending this, just using it as an example. You'll see this. Often times you'll see very outlandish behavior. They've made a mess of their lives and the reason they use is because they're a victim. It's what I like to call a fill-in-the-blank argument because it's always the same argument regardless of what you fill in the blank with. It's racism, it's sexism, it's my culture, it's my dysfunctional family, it's my fill in the blank. It always comes down to they're a victim and they are not responsible for their choices.

We can see that this goes directly against what God's word teaches as well. Ezekiel 18 directly addresses what I'm talking about here. I'll summarize a good bit of the first part of this chapter. Basically, it gives several scenarios. It starts off describing a righteous man who lived a good life. He's tried to obey God the best that he can but he winds up having a son and his son grows up and decides he's going to completely rebel and go in the opposite direction. The son lives a rebellious life and is a sinner. Then that son has his own son who grows up, looks at his father's example and sees that it didn't work out too good for his father so he doesn't follow his father's example. So he lives a righteous life. But the point in all of this is that all of them have to stand or fall on their own decisions. None of them can take credit for the other's success or blame their failures on someone else. Everyone has to stand or fall and take their personal responsibility for their own choices.

Ezekiel 18:19. *Yet you say, 'Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?' Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and observed them, he shall surely live.*

20) *The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.*

21) *"But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die.*

22) *None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live.*

23) *Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord GOD, "and not that he should turn from his ways and live?*

24) *"But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die.*

25) *"Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' Hear now, O house of Israel, is it not My way which is fair, and your ways which are not fair? (NKJV)*

That's our natural inclination where they think evil is good and good is evil and God is unfair and we somehow know better than him. That's our natural inclination.

26) *When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies.*

27) *Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive.*

28) *Because he considers and turns away from all the transgressions which he committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.*

29) *Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O house of Israel, is it not My ways which are fair, and your ways which are not fair?*

30) *"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord GOD. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin.*

31) *Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?*

32) *For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!" (NKJV)*

God's word teaches us to evaluate things from the fruits of one's behavior and to look at cause and effect. If we follow His ways, things generally turn out better. If we choose to go the other way, things generally turn out bad because there is such a thing as absolute truth. Think about how insidious this philosophy of multiculturalism is. All cultures are equal, all religions, all points of view are all equal and that we can never say that one is inherently better than the other because that's racist.

Think about that and I want you to see what this also does to moral judgments in terms of how we think. You have to explain disparities then. You have to explain why one culture tends to consistently do better than another and why some cultures consistently lag behind. Common sense tells us this: If you're consistently over time saying that this group tends to outperform another group, common sense says there's probably two things at play here. Chances are that the group that is doing better is probably doing something right. There's probably some reason that they are being successful. If the other group is consistently lagging behind, they're probably not practicing what the other guys are doing right, but maybe they're doing things that sabotage their own success.

Therefore it would behoove the group that is lagging behind to look to see what they need to learn to improve their outcome. That's what common sense teaches you. But that common sense viewpoint is political incorrect and you can't even think about that because that's racist, you are forced to think that the only explanation you can come up with is that those that are successful cheated and those that are always lagging behind are being oppressed, they are the victim.

Think of that through the eyes of a moral judgment. Isn't it always morally better to be the downtrodden victim than to be the evil cheater? Wouldn't that be the logical way to look at that? Now what do we have? We have a judgment that success is bad and failure is good. Think about how upside down that makes our thinking. That's literally how this perverts our thinking.

This whole idea starts off with the idea that it's all about equality and fairness because again, who would be against equality and fairness? That just sounds so positive. But when you think in reality, it's blinding you to see the good ways and it's turning good into evil and evil into good. It's an insidious evil that leavens our culture and if we don't stay aware of this and recognize these messages when they're thrown at us, it leavens our thinking and causes us to want to think more in a perverted, sinful manner.

The second philosophy I'd like to look at today is the philosophy of feminism. Feminism, especially in the United States, became extant in the 1970s. There were certain aspects of our culture that did not treat women fairly. Women were treated as second-class citizens. There was some dissatisfaction over that. But this whole movement has gone in a completely different direction. If you look at what this movement is about today, it isn't about equality, it's about rebellion. Oftentimes you see very sinful behavior being justified by it.

What are some of the biggest causes you hear the feminists making noise about? Abortion and sexual immorality. You have to protect their right to kill babies at will. Not only that but it's also promoting the hook up culture of sexual immorality. You see very much an idea of blatant sin being promoted by it.

There is a much more insidious thing that it's done. The average church member looks at that and knows that abortion is murder. We don't get confused over that at all. But feminism is an outright attack on gender roles. You will see this whole idea of equality is always pushed with this. They have confused the subject of gender roles and not only that, they viciously attack anybody who would ever suggest that gender roles is a valid idea.

Think about this from the perspective of what God teaches in the new testament. Put yourself in God's shoes and you understand how important this subject is. If you're God and you create human beings as the pinnacle of your creation, then you make these human beings, you design the concept of marriage as the foundation of the family and society. You write an instruction manual for your creation to teach them how to live. And you certainly in one book you can't contain all knowledge that there is to know, and

that's not the objective. You try to cover the most important things that you need to understand.

If you look in the new testament, what do you see covered most often about marriage? About half a dozen times what you're going to see covered is the subject of gender roles. The role for a husband, the role for a wife, and you see these both articulated. And the important thing to realize is that they are distinct and different. In other words, God created men and women differently, wired them differently with different strengths and weaknesses to perform different roles. The reason I point that out is because those who support this concept of equality, typically apply that concept to this subject of gender roles, and it isn't even a valid concept.

Understand what I mean by that. I'm not in any way saying that any sex is more inherently superior to the other. That is not where I'm going with this. What I'm trying to get across is that we are comparing apples to oranges. If you have distinct and separate roles, they're not completely interchangeable. Oftentimes they are looked at from the point of view that everything should be equal and interchangeable and that's not even valid logic.

Let's notice how God describes this.

Ephesians 5:22. *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

23) For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

24) Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

25) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

26) that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

27) that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

28) So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

29) For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

30) For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

31) "for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

32) This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33) Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (NKJV)

As you can see, here we have a completely different set of instructions for husband and wife. I want you to understand the basic logic behind that. If the roles were exactly the same and completely interchangeable, what would be the point in giving different

instructions to each individual? It would just be one set of instructions because it would all be interchangeable. By virtue of the fact that there are different sets of instructions, means these are unique and different roles. They're not completely interchangeable.

Turn over the 1 Peter 3. We'll notice another set of scriptures that talks about this. We won't have time to go through all the different scriptures that talk about this but if you follow this subject through the new testament, it's addressed about a half dozen times.

1 Peter 3:1. *Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,*

2) when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

3) Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—

4) rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

5) For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,

6) as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

7) Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. (NKJV)

Notice we have completely different and separate instructions laid out for both the husband and the wife and there are different roles that each play.

A friend of mine used to say, "I only see the middle of the road as I jump from one ditch to the other." I think that kind of describes the human condition. Not only us as individuals, but as a society and culture. We'll wind up in a ditch, realize we're in a ditch and we need to correct it and instead of winding up in the middle, we jump right over the middle and into the other ditch. The positive aspects of feminism were when women were not treated equally or fairly. But what has happened here in the name of equality is that it basically reversed. Instead of treating women fairly, it's now female superiority. You often will hear that if you pay attention to our education system and entertainment, you often see a message being put across. It's kind of "man – bad; woman – good." I'll give you some examples later of how that comes out. They're trying to undermine those roles. We've jumped from one ditch to the other.

If you're God and you're writing an instruction manual and you design this concept of marriage and the one thing that you choose to put in your instruction manual is gender roles and you cover this again and again and again. There's tons of other good information that you could have incorporated but you didn't, and you just tried to cover what's most important. That means He thought this was fundamentally important to the success of marriage and family.

Also think of this from the opposite point of view. If you're Satan and your objection is exactly the opposite, you don't want to make marriages happy and successful and build good families. You want to tear that apart. You want to make marriages unsuccessful and you want to turn against all of this and destroy the very family structure. What is the most effective way that you can do that? Attack the very understanding of gender roles and not only try to turn people to the opposite of what's described here, but make it politically incorrect for anyone to even talk about this, to where anyone that would even mention that following God's instruction is a good idea is put down. Then you can create the perception that God's ways are bad and evil and oppressive and going the opposite direction which is liberation and freedom. That's exactly what has happened in our culture today.

I'd like to give you some examples of that. You may be familiar with the name Candace Cameron Bure. She's an actress in Hollywood, probably most famous for her role as DJ Tanner in the TV series "Full House." It was on many years ago. She was a child actor at the time. She is now an adult, married with three children. In the last few years she wrote a book about her life. Candace is what I'd call a professing Christian, she's not in the Church of God but she is someone who very much tries to live her life by Judeo-Christian values. One of the things she mentioned in her book was that her and her husband try to follow the biblical example laid out like in Ephesians 5, Colossians 3, and other sections of the Bible and try to practice that in their marriage. It wasn't the subject of the book, that was just one thing she mentioned in talking about her career and her life and all the challenges that she's dealt with. But by daring to mention the fact that she thought wives submitting to their husbands was a good idea and made her marriage successful, she has been skewed by the mainstream media. Feminists came out in droves to attack her in every way possible for ever daring to say this. If you read her comments, it's a very balanced point of view that she's putting across. To back that up, I'd like to read you a couple of quotes here.

This first sentence is taken word-for-word out of her book. This is part of the comments that started all the controversy.

I am not a passive person, but I choose to fall into a more submissive role in our relationship because I wanted to do everything in my power to make my marriage and family work.

Again this is part of the comments that got her talked about in the media and attached so much. The rest of this is from a transcript of an interview that she did talking about the book. You'll see the roles she is talking about is a very balanced view.

The definition that I'm using with the word "submissive" is the biblical definition of that so it is meekness, it is not weakness. It is strength under control, it is bridled strength. I love that the man is the leader. I want him to lead and be the head of our family and those major decisions do fall on him. It doesn't mean I don't voice my opinion. It doesn't mean I don't have an opinion. I absolutely do. But it is very difficult to have two heads of authority. When you're competing with two

heads, that can pose a lot of problems or issues. So within our marriage, we are equal in our importance but we are just different in our performances within our marriage. Clearly I have been married for 17 years and we have a very happy marriage and it works very well. I trust my husband, but that trust has been built. And I know that because I trust him I build him up and give him the respect that he would like to have within marriage. He also listens to everything I have to say and takes my opinion very seriously. Many of the times he will sway to do what I would like, even if he doesn't see eye-to-eye with me because he really values my opinion.

What's happening here is that he's being a loving leader of the family, she's not being mistreated or put down but she is looking to him as the leader of the family and submitting to that and following him. Again, it's a very balanced view of what the Bible describes.

What I'd like you to see is that this philosophy of feminism has taken an all-out attack on gender roles. I'm going to read to you later some direct quotes from the founders of this movement. They're very objective was to destroy the nuclear family and marriages in America. That is a stated, documented goal.

If you pay attention to entertainment that we have in our popular culture, I'd like to sum it up with a quote from Suzanne Venker. She is an author and has written several books. One of them is called "The Flip Side of Feminism" which a very good resource.

"Father Knows Best" has been replaced by replaced by "Dad's an Idiot."

What she's referring to is our popular entertainment. If you watch most sitcoms today and even dramas, you see a common formula. The husband-father figure in the show is a bumbling idiot. He's the butt of all the jokes. He is ridiculed and made fun of. His wife is a strong, capable person who has to come in and kind of rescue him from all the problems he creates. You'll see this formula playing out again and again. Not only is it an issue of the husband-father typical being a bumbling idiot fool, but often the wife in these shows is emasculating, attacking of him, and is very much critical and openly putting him down. It's in show after show after show, in dramas, sitcoms, and it plays out everywhere. It's a direct attack on the whole role of husband and father.

Look at the statistics since the movement has taken over our culture since the 1970s. Divorce has been around since there has been marriage and there has always been a divorce rate. But from the 1970s, you'll see a huge spike in the divorce rate and it continues into the 90s and beyond. Then you see the divorce rate begin to decline, but so does the marriage rate. So today, the divorce rate is not an indication that things are getting better, it's just that more and more people are not even getting married in the first place.

If you're God and by virtue what you've put in the Bible, the subject of gender roles was extremely important by virtue of how much you covered it in the Bible and that is

obviously a vital aspect to the success of a marriage. If that very subject become confused, attacked and maligned, what would you naturally expect? The tearing apart of the family. That is what has happened in our culture.

What I want you to see here is that this was actually a stated goal of the feminist movement. I want to share with you several quotes of some of the leaders who started this movement in the 1970s. I'll readily admit these are the more radical individuals in the movement, but if you compare what this is saying with what has happened in society, you're going to see a lot of correlations.

Marriage has existed for the benefit of men and has been a legally sanctioned method of control over women. We must work to destroy it. The end of the institution of marriage is a necessary condition for the liberation of women. Therefore it is important for us to encourage women to leave their husbands and not to live individually with them. All of history must be rewritten in terms of oppression of women. We must go to back to ancient female religions like witchcraft.

The Declaration of Feminism
published in November, 1971

Since marriage constituted slavery for women, it is clear that the women's movement must concentrate on attacking this institution. Freedom for women cannot be won without the abolition of marriage.

Radical Feminism and Marriage
published in 1970

Being a housewife is an illegitimate profession. The choice to serve and be protected and plan towards being a family maker is a choice that shouldn't be. The heart of radical feminism is to change that.

Vivian Gornick
quoted in the Daily Illinois
(newspaper put out by the University of Illinois)
from April 25, 1981

This is from the same people who very much trumpet that their whole cause is a woman's right to choose and how dare anybody infringe upon a woman's right to choose. But notice what happens when a woman chooses differently than what they think. They are immediately going to try to condemn that and shut them up and attack them. Because again, this isn't about women's rights and fairness, this is about redesigning society and turning against God.

To share the last couple of quotes:

Only when manhood is dead and it will perish when the ravaged femininity no longer sustains it, only then will we know what it is to be free.

Andrea Dworkan
from a speech made at
The Massachusetts Institute of Technology
on September 26, 1975

They're telling you their absolute objective is attacking and demonizing manhood and masculinity. Again if you watch what happens in our culture today, that's very often the message that you get. It's very often "man – bad, woman – good."

The nuclear family must be destroyed. People must find better ways of living together. Whatever its ultimate meaning, the breakup of families is now an objectively revolutionary process. Families have supported oppression by separating people into small isolated units unable to join together to fight for a common interest.

Linda Gordon
Women – A Journal of Liberation
Fall, 1969

You can see these are the more radical individuals of this movement. What they're getting at is the attack of masculinity and men, putting that down as female superiority. Their stated objective was tearing apart the nuclear family. So you can understand this really isn't about equality and fairness. This is about evil. This is about supporting evil. It puts a good face on it by calling it equality.

The thing to be aware of is that our culture constantly throws these types of messages at us. It's all throughout our entertainment and our education. Just as a quick example, you'll see on college campuses today, you'll hear the phrase "rape culture." If you think about where that comes from, they support all of this through very flawed statistics and let me give you a basic idea.

What you hear today is that one out of every five women on college campuses is subject to rape. But you have to understand how they're defining that. Compare that to what the U.S. Department of Justice reports as actual reported rapes. If you look at their statistics, between 1995 and 2013 (an 18-year period) if you do the math of college age women who reported being raped, the ratios turn out to be 1 in 164. Obviously we're talking about reported statistics and that's a crime that often goes unreported. If you double, triple or quadruple that number to account for those unreported, you wind up with 1 out of 82 or if you quadruple it 1 out of 41. You don't get anywhere near 1 out of 5.

How do they come up with that number? By skewed surveys in terms of how they collected the data. Some of the questions they asked were about engaging in sex when you've been under the influence of alcohol or drugs. They weren't talking about the scenario where someone drugs you against your will. To give you a scenario, two

individuals are out drinking. They both drink too much, are inebriated, and are now making bad decisions and they engage in sexual behavior as a result of that. Probably something that they wouldn't have done if they were sober and thinking straight. The way this is defined then is they're looking at the woman as a rape victim and the guy as a rapist. Do you see the logic of its all? It's not saying everyone's accountable for their choices and decisions. It's skewed by a political agenda.

My point is to get us to look at these types of messages that come at us constantly in our culture. It's similar to the environment of the church in Corinth. As Paul was mentioning to them, even though they obviously weren't going to go out and immediately embrace the behavior of this guy who was having an affair with his step-mother, his point was if you allow this influence, it's going to affect your thinking and you will wind up going more and more in that direction. Your thought processes and decisions now start becoming more and more influenced by sin.

My point is that we live in an environment saturated with sin. It constantly gives us these types of messages. It's infiltrated our education and entertainment and government. It comes at us from every direction. We must recognize this and realize the type of evil messages that are coming at us. I doubt if any of us will support abortion or anything of that nature, but if we start taking in some of these messages, we can have our thinking perverted and going in the direction of these types of philosophies. It comes down to what Paul was saying, that a little leaven leavens the whole lump. That can happen to us as well.

We need to be aware of this and of the messages that are constantly thrown at us in our culture so we can be on guard for that. Because again, bread can become leavened by two ways. One by purposely trying to leaven it, and the other by simply not taking action to prevent it. So let's be aware of these things and take action to prevent it, realizing that a little leaven leavens the whole lump.