

Are You God's Policeman?

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I just want to relate something to you that someone in Phoenix told me about translating the Bible, and he said that he asked the question years ago: 'Why, with all the things that Church had—the college, the ministers and all the personnel and everything—they couldn't put together a Bible that would be accurate according to the original and according to the Word of God? The answer was, 'We'd get puffed up! We'd get all proud!'

I said, 'My experience in doing the Bible had exactly the opposite. It was humbling to realize how many men, in jeopardy of their lives, copied, translated, and preserved the words so that we could have it, and how God watched over it; *God kept it!* It was really a very humbling experience—I have a copy of one of the original printed Stephen Text 1550—to hold that and look at that, and to realize I have something in my hands that is over 450-years-old. ***There's the Word of God!***

The Greek is a little different and is a little harder to read, but there it was. So, here we are down at the end-time and anything we can do doesn't puff us up at all, because:

- God expects us to do it
- He'll give us the strength to do it
- He will help us to do it

All the glory and everything goes to God. After all, just stop and think, everything we have, everything that we are, all comes from God.

That's what makes 'religion' so insane! More insane than atheism, which is one form of insanity. But insane from the point of view that *men* correct God! *Men tell God what to do!* 'Oh, we like this, God, but we don't like this. We'll still be good, but we don't want anything to do with this.'

I think that in going through and looking at the Old Testament as much I have, I've had exactly the same experience. Here's the Word of God talking about things and people, which forms the very history of the backbone of all of God's plan, coming down to the Church and we have it all right here in one book, *the Bible!* What God did in causing so many billions of copies of New Testaments and Bibles to be produced in the world, it doesn't matter who did it. ***God made it happen!*** If we can serve the Church and serve other people to help lead them to the Truth, that's what God has laid before us to do!

I thought that was quite an answer that was given, and here we are just little ole us doing things

hundreds of millions of dollars couldn't do. It has to be what God desires, and that's the whole point of why we're here. ***We do what God desires! We do what God wills!*** We have to fight off the things that we are confronted with. We have to overcome our own problems. We have to fight against the world, and fight against even so many judgmental brethren that end up being ***God's policemen!*** ***God's self-appointed policemen!***

Everyone is a an Inspector Trousseau with his magnifying glass going around, or Sherlock Holmes, trying to find the least little thing, the least little evidence, and they miss the whole point of what God wants us to be and to have, and how we are to conduct our lives.

If there's anything we can do to help brethren come back to that point and see what they need to do, then we need to really emphasize it. The thing that's important to understand is that ***God did not create a 'religion! God created a way of life!***

- Cain created a religion
- Nimrod created a religion
- many other people since then have created religions

{note sermon series: *Why God Hates Religion*}

All of them, one way or the other, end up being the *policemen of God!* They also end up being the Vicar of Christ, and end up telling God what to do! They miss the whole point.

They love the Scriptures that say, 'God is love.' They love the Scriptures that say, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whomever believes on Him may not perish but have everlasting life.' ***Then they march up to God and tell Him what to do!*** They love all the Scriptures about love, because it makes them feel good, rather than understanding that having the mind of Christ... And didn't Jesus say that He loved us? And that we are to love one another?

What was one of the most important messages that Christ gave His disciples on that last Passover? ***Love one another as I have loved you, and by this all men shall know that you are My disciples!***

In the comments that we have discussed here, many have experienced that they have been treated better by people in the world than by people in the Church, because in establishing righteousness they are 'gardeners in other people's garden.' Instead of tending to their own weeds and their own

problems, they are hoeing, trimming, clipping and rooting up in other people's garden.

Jesus talked about this; one of the very first things He brought out. Remember the account in John 7 when they brought the woman caught in adultery—they failed to bring the man, because you can't commit adultery alone—and they were all wanting to have her stoned, and said, 'Master, Moses says that we're to stone such a one as this, what do You say?' Jesus stooped down to write in the sand. Everyone wants to know what was written in the sand. I think it was, 'Where is the man?'

Then He stood up and said, 'Every one of you who is without sin, you pick up the first stone.' They all began to leave beginning with the older to the younger. The older you get the more you realize that you're a sinner. *That's a truism!* The younger that you are the more right that you feel that you are, and crusader for the world and all this sort of thing. They were the last ones to leave.

In Matt. 7 we're told about judgment. This also becomes a responsibility. {note sermon series and booklet" *Judge Righteous Judgment*}

- judgment without mercy
- judgment without knowledge
- judgment without facts
- condemnation based on opinion
- talking about people
- busy-bodying into other people's business

becomes a practice in the Church! What we need to do is perhaps—and I think it would be wise to do so—bring some sermons on it, bring some Bible studies on it and use some good examples to help people so that they are not God's *self-appointed policemen!*

You have that atmosphere on the news today. Every reporter is a policeman! Everyone has got to correct someone else! So, the whole world is in an atmosphere of who's right and who's wrong. Who did this, who did that and who did the other thing. Rarely when they get all the facts is it ever known.

Standing for the Truth is one thing. How you treat someone you see is sinning is another thing. So, Jesus covered it here:

Matthew 7:1: "Do not condemn *others*, so that you yourself will not be condemned"—***because it always comes back!*** There are some people who are always condemning.

Verse 2: "For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete out, it shall be measured again to you."

Everyone wants mercy. When you get in trouble, you want mercy and forgiveness. Remember this: ***If you want mercy, you show mercy!*** If you don't want to be judged, especially by 'God's policemen'—who don't have all the facts—***then don't you do it!*** Give everything a benefit of doubt and don't rush to judgment like in the Natalie Holloway case. No one knows what happened. They know she is gone. Where she has gone nobody knows. Until they find something that is conclusive, then they shouldn't rush to judgment. This is what Jesus says:

Verse 3: "Now, why do you look at the sliver that *is* in your brother's eye..." ***That's what happens!*** When you have a magnifying glass a sliver looks really big and you can stretch it all out of proportion.

"..but you do not perceive the beam in your *own* eye? Or how will you say to your brother, 'Allow *me* to remove the sliver from your eye'; and behold, the beam *is* in your *own* eye?" (vs 3-4).

Here's what happens when you rush to judgment without the facts, and you get all emotional. You don't take time to know and you make accusations that ought not to be made in the heat of the moment, because you're angry. You never stop and ask, 'Why am I angry?' The first thing to do is ask: Is it your business? If it's not your business, ***get out of someone else's garden!***

And since you're 'God's policeman' you don't give credit to God for being able to take care of it. Is God able to take care of it? ***Well, He's God of the whole heaven and earth!*** Certainly He's able to take care of it!

Then He gives a piece of advice, v 5: "*You hypocrite, first cast out the beam from your own eye, and then you shall see clearly to remove the sliver from your brother's eye.*"

John gave us another admonition in 1-John 5:16: "If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is* not unto death, **he shall ask...**"

He is to pray; put it in God's hands and then do what you can to encourage the person without being 'God's policeman.' Maybe that individual just needs some befriending. Or if it's a real serious problem, you don't get out and pound the drums and condemn and run an inquisition and you're ready to kill. What does God say? ***He says that He will answer the prayer!***

Let's read what it says leading up to that, v 13: "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God in order that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue* to believe in the name of the Son of God."

And this is the confidence that we have toward Him: that **if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us**" (vs 13-14).

- Is it God's will if someone sins that they come to repentance? *Of course, it is!*
- Are you God's messenger of repentance? *Not unless God makes it absolutely clear to you that you are!*

Therefore, what you do, v 15: "And if we know that He hears us, whatever we may ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him. If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is* not unto death, **he shall ask** and He will give him life for those who do not sin unto death. There is a sin unto death; concerning that *sin*, I do not say that he should make *any supplication to God*" (vs 15-16).

That's when a person is so far gone and out there serving the devil. They have separated themselves completely. If someone is sinning, don't march right up and say, 'Oh, you're sinning. Don't you know you shouldn't do this? Don't you know you shouldn't do that?'

- Why?
- Have you heard?
- Did you see?
- Do you know?

Then you add sin to sin by becoming a talebearer and a gossip! That's what happens with people in the Church.

Let's see another thing that's important. Here is the whole principle. Here's what Christ desires.

Matthew 9:9: "And passing from there, Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and said to him, 'Follow Me.' And he arose and followed Him. Then it came to pass, when Jesus sat down *to eat* in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And after seeing *this*, the Pharisees... [who were 'God's policemen' of the time] ...said to His disciples, 'Why does your Master eat with tax collectors and sinners?' But when Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, 'Those who are strong do not have need of a physician, but those who are sick. Now, go and learn what this means: **"I desire mercy and not sacrifice."** For I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners to repentance'" (vs 9-13). *So, the brethren need to know:*

- to be merciful to each other
- to be kind to each other
- to be loving to each other

Likewise we to them! The good lesson for the 'policeman' to learn is that **love is a way of life!** There's an awful lot that we can learn. Isn't that something that is interesting about the Word of God and about how we view things, take things and understand things? When you come back to Scriptures that we've gone over many times and go over them again, we learn a whole lot more.

Actually, when you read 1-Cor. 13 here is a loving way of correcting. A lot of this is very, very corrective. But done in such a way that gives a desire to change. This is what we need to do whenever there's something that needs to be corrected. Paul applies it to himself. I think God inspired it to be this way, rather than saying *you*. The first thing Paul addresses is *vanity*. That's very important!

1-Corinthians 13:1: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels... [I don't know anybody who knows an angelic language] ...but do not have love, **I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.**"

Not *as* but *are*; you become that. The brethren need to realize that much of the policing that they do in a destructive or hateful manner toward other brethren is because of:

1. vanity
2. they want to exalt themselves and prove that they know more and can do better than the person that they're correcting

And as 'God's policemen they better listen to me.'

Unless you have love, even the correction that you give, even the things that you point out that are wrong, are going to fall on deaf ears, because they'll say, 'Oh, listen to that!'

This is why, if you will notice in the sermons that I bring, very rarely do I do any correcting. If I can teach them the way they need to go, then where does the correction come from? ***It comes from the self; from within!*** This is what Paul is doing, and by using the application of himself, he removes himself from being the hypocrite and the one who is condemning. He's saying something that applies to everyone by applying it to himself.

What did he say of himself later on? *Christ came in the world to save sinner of whom I am the chief!* (1-Tim.). In applying this to himself he's helping those who hear it to take it and apply it to themselves and say, 'Oh, yeah, what about what I say, what I think, what I talk about? Do I have love?'

Verse 2: "If I have ***the gift of prophecy...***"

Isn't this something that people get all excited about in church? 'Well, So and So understands prophecy. He doesn't understand prophecy, tell me.' In all the years in the church how the prophecies came to past and how we were told years ago didn't happen!

"...and **understand all mysteries...**" Understand everything that's in the Bible, figure out everything that you could possibly think of.

"...and **all knowledge...**" Don't they 'police' and say, 'He doesn't know his Bible very well.' You can almost hear it. Then when they tell someone else...

"...and **if I have all faith...**" (v 2). 'You don't have faith, people aren't healed like they ought to be.' Healing is important, but what about the 'trial unto death.' Is that not also important?

Let me just tell you this concerning faith, healing and taking care of things:. You can do everything absolutely right; you can eat all organic food; you can avoid everything that causes cancer; you can have perfect health until the day you die, **but you're still going to die!**

God is in the business of bringing saints faithfully to the end of their course, **that they die in the faith!** God 'delights in bringing a sermon for those who have endured to the end and are faithful to the end,' and so do I! Given the average age of the Church, one of your most frequent activities in the future will entail funerals. It's not a matter of a lack of faith, it's a matter of faith *to die in the faith*. When people go around and start judging people's faith:

- he didn't have faith
- she didn't have faith
 - Why did this happen to them?
 - they must have done something wrong
 - Who knows what they have done? *God knows!*
 - Why should we judge them?
 - Why not pray for them?
 - Why not send them some flowers?

Why not say:

- we're praying for you
- we know it's difficult
- we know you're trusting in God
- we know you're doing everything you can
- if there's anyway I can help, let me know

If you had great ability to perform miracles, "...so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing" (v 2). The whole point of conversion is that we come to realize that we are nothing. That God *only* is the One Who is everything!

The book of Job has been given to show us that it doesn't matter how righteous you are, how many faults you can find in other people, how much you police other people, what good works you do and so forth, unless you have love...

When you analyze what Job said and what he did, he did not have the love of God! He was perfect in the letter of the Law, but he was lacking in love. There are many of us in the Church that fit into that category. We have a lot of knowledge, but we're lacking in love. What we lack in love then our carnality comes out and we become condemning and judgmental.

After Job challenged God and said, 'God doesn't recognize my righteousness; I wish God would come down and talk to me and I would let Him know how good I have been.' So, God answered His wish, after Elihu softened him up along the way. Elihu stood up and said

I've heard you talk all this time, and my spirit is ready to explode in me; I've got to talk. I perceive that the elder men are not necessarily wise. I have sat here and listened to you three. How dare you talk against God and say that you're more righteous than Him.'

Here's God's answer to Job. This is God's answer to all of the 'policemen of God'; these *self-appointed* 'policemen of God.'

Job 40:1: "And the LORD answered Job and said, 'Shall he who contends with the Almighty instruct *Him*? **He who reproves God, let him answer it**'" (vs 1-2).

- if God is perfect, *which He is*
- if God is love, *which He is*
- if God is merciful, *which He is*
- if God is kind and longsuffering, *which He is*

What man is going to correct God? In a sense, when the 'policemen' take it upon themselves to correct people, in a self-appointed way, they're reproving God in this way: When there is a problem in a person's life, does God know it? *Of course, He does!*

Now, if someone comes and asks for some help and you have an opportunity to point some things out to them, consider yourself first, and do so in a humble way. Admit your mistakes and your faults and some of the things that you have done. Tell them, 'I know how you feel,' so you're not contending with God. "...He who reproves God, let him answer it..."

Verse 3: "And Job answered the LORD and said, 'Behold, I am vile!....'" (vs 3-4). That's the

first time he said that. He'd been saying all along how 'good I am; I've done this and that and the other thing. I've gone here and done this, helped this,' and so forth.

"...What shall I answer You? I will lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.' And the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 'Gird up your loins now like a man. I will demand of you, and you declare unto Me. Will you even annul My judgment?...'" (vs 4-8). We can add in there:

- Will you disannul God's mercy?
- Will you disannul God's Spirit in that person?
- Will you disannul any of the work that God is doing by setting yourself up as 'God's policeman' to correct the problem?

Then furthermore, get your helpers—the busybodies around—to reinforce what you're saying and doing, and causing more difficulties and divisions.

"...Will you condemn Me so that you may be righteous? And *have* you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His? Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, and array yourself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of your wrath; and behold everyone who is proud, and abase him. Look on everyone *who is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in darkness" (vs 8-13).

In other words, He's saying, 'Look, all of these things are My job, Job. You can't do them!' Stop and think:

- Who converts us?
 - The policemen of God?
- or
- God? *God converts us!*

Verse 14: "Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you." You know the rest of the story, *Job repented!*

Very similar to 1-Cor. 13; if you have all of these things, all of these gifts and you are totally perfect in keeping the commandments of God—which you can't be, because if you were I don't think your vanity could stand it. God would probably make sure that you tripped up over yourself and you would find yourself sinning. People like to do 'good works' for God.

1-Corinthians 13:3: "And if I give away all my goods, and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, I have gained nothing."

In the *King James* it says, 'give all my goods to the poor,' but it doesn't say that in the original. People can give their goods to causes to fund great things—not to the poor necessarily—and that's a commendable thing.

Here's the way of life and here's the correction, because the first part of it Paul applied to himself so that others would then in turn apply it to themselves. Now he's saying from v 4 to apply this to yourself, this is the standard. In the place of love, put your name there and let this be something that will correct you:

Verse 4: "Love is patient..." What happens with 'God's policemen'? *They're the most impatient in the world!*

"...and is kind..." *They are not, they're talebearers; they're finger-pointers!*

"...love envies not, does not brag about itself, is not puffed up" (v 4). You get into other problems, too, of human nature.

All of this becomes a very correcting thing. If we focus on the Word of God and help the brethren focus on the Word of God—and I hope that if there are any *self-appointed* 'policemen of God' listening to this sermon, that you would take the correction from the Word of God and apply it to yourself. Wouldn't it be absolutely the most ideal church situation if:

- everyone loves each other
- prays for each other
- watches out for each other
- does not condemn anyone
- does not pull the 'policeman' routine
- does not pull the judgment routine

but puts it all in God's hands and encourages everyone to grow in grace and knowledge and overcome!

That's what this is designed to do. That's what God wants us to do. That's what God wants the brethren to do. That's why, in handling certain situations and things, you don't immediately go in and do it, because the person can come along and find out and correct himself or herself.

How many times have you done something that later on you look back on it and you:

- see how wrong you were?
- see how vain you were?
- see how selfish you were?

And you repent! What has happened? God has brought the correction!

What John said, 'If you see someone sin not a sin unto death, you pray for them.' We're told that God will answer that prayer. This is how it needs to be.

Verse 5: "*Love does not behave disgracefully...*" *That is one thing that self-appointed 'policemen of God' do!*

"...does not seek its own things, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil" (v 5). *All of those things apply to 'God's policemen.'*

I'm going to go around and find out what's going on here. I'm going to go and find out what So and So is doing. Have you heard this? Did you know that?

I tell you one thing that's important that we need to get across to the brethren: ***Do not talk about one another!***

- unless it is encouraging
- unless it something that is good
- unless it is something that is positive

That will help overcome a lot of these problems and difficulties that people have.

When people get exposed to other people's sins and make it their business and talk about them and pass it on, sometimes it even creates such an atmosphere that the person feels that there is no hope. A person feels that everyone is against them. We need to help the brethren create the right kind of atmosphere in whatever group they are with.

Verse 6: "Does not rejoice in iniquity..." *If you don't rejoice in iniquity, you don't pass it on!* If you don't talk about it and don't pass it on, those who are in the business of being 'God's policemen' accuse you of doing nothing about it, and accuse you of participating with them when that is not the case. They may not even know that you're trying to help that person and work with that person and help them overcome.

"...but rejoices in the Truth" (v 6). *There's another Scripture that says, 'Love covers a multitude of sins,'* which is a very important Scripture to remember. It doesn't mean that it overlooks them, it means that it doesn't broadcast them abroad; it means that you're praying for the person who has the problem or whatever the sin is. When there is a solution then you don't broadcast that abroad, *just let the change be evident!*

A minister baptized a man some time ago and the change was like day and night. What did he do for him? *He counseled him and made sure that he repented of his sins; made sure that he understood what he was doing so that he could receive the Spirit*

of God!

It's God's Spirit that entered into that man's mind and heart and changed his life. This is the way we need to approach a lot of these things. I think that too many brethren, even in the Church, have not gotten out of 'religion,' yet. They don't see the big picture of their calling and the big picture of their relationship with God. They need to understand that so they can be inspired.

The way that people can change the most is to be inspired to change, so that they will have the inner motivation to make the corrections, the inner motivation to do what they know they need to do. Just like you, when you sin and you know that you ought not, but you haven't gotten around, yet, to know what you ought to do and repenting of what you ought not do.

What happens? When you hear something that really inspires you, what does that lead you to do more than anything else?

- the desire to change
- the desire to repent
- the desire to go ahead
- the desire to understand

That whatever the obstacle is:

- God is there
- you can do it
- it can be overcome

This is what Paul is trying to do here in 1-Cor. 13; saying that the overall goal of the character that you need to have—*which is the mind of Christ and God*—that you have the love of God. It is *a way of life* and it comes out in your life in everything that you do.

It doesn't mean that you're going to be perfect. You're still going to have problems and difficulties that come along, too. But this is always the goal! This is always the course.

(go to the next track)

Verse 7: "*Love bears all things...*" *Regardless of the trial, you can bear it! With every trial, God gives a way of escape!* God will help you out of it. "...bears all things...": the good, the bad, the ugly! Sometimes we have to deal with those things.

"...believes all things, hopes all things..." ***As long as there is life there is hope!***

I got a letter where someone received a New Testament; I think one of the brethren gave it to her. She wrote and said, 'I was in total despair, ready to give up on everything!' She had been in the Church of God for years and years. 'I didn't know what to

do, and I didn't know where to go. Someone gave me the New Testament, and *I am alive again!*'

Remember: ***As long as there is life, there's hope!*** If there is sin and they're still living, there can always be repentance. That's why you need to pray for them. For those who have troubles and problems, don't go around being 'God's policeman' and point it out to everyone and say:

- Have you heard?
- Have you noticed?
- Did you see?

Pray for that individual; put it in God's hands!
Then do what you can to encourage them.

"...endures all things" (vs 7). There are going to be a lot of things that we're going to have to endure! Think about all the things you've had to go through and endure up to this point. There are going to be many, many more.

- ***if*** you are inspired, *you won't get weary*
- ***if*** you have hope, *you won't get depressed*
- ***if*** you have faith, *you will always believe*
- ***if*** you have love and a relationship with God, *you're going to make it*

Guaranteed plan, v 8: "**Love never fails....**" *Always works!* That's what needs to be. In light of this, all the 'policemen' need to do is stop and ask:

- How do I line up with 1-Cor. 13?
- How can I police myself?

Let's change the emphasis. You be 'God's policeman' for ***yourself!*** Not 'self-appointed' for other people! Let God intervene and help you learn the love of God so that you can help other people. 'A kind word spoken lifts the heart.' That's what we need for all those who have sinned a sin not unto death.

"...But whether *there be* prophecies..." (v 8). These can't be the prophecies of God, because Jesus said, 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.' So, these are prophecies of men!

"...they shall cease..." (v 8)—they shall fail. Isn't that true?

"...whether *there be* languages, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part..." (vs 8-9). *We're looking ahead to the future!*

"...and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside" (vs 9-10).

Let's see what it is that God is doing with

us. God is the One Who is to do it. God is the One Who is to make it happen. This fits right along with what we're talking about here:

Matthew 5:43: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'" ***That's what happens with self-appointed policemen for God!*** They end up despising someone, which is next to hate and to become your enemy, rather than your brother or sister, or friend.

Verse 44: "But I say to you, **love your enemies...**" *This is a whole change of attitude!*

If we are to love our enemies, which Jesus says we are, what do you think Christ is going to think about the fact that we don't love each other the way we ought to? *Think about that!*

"...bless those who curse you..." *Let's stop and ask:* All these words spoken by Jesus, did He live by them? *Yes, He did!* Everything against Him was worse than any human being in the world.

"...do good to those who hate you..." *I can't help but think of the guard that Peter cut the ear off, that came out there. And Jesus reached up and healed him. Was that doing good? Yes, it was!*

"...and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you" (v 44). *If you are to do that for your enemies and those who hate you and persecute you and so forth, what should you do for the brethren?*

Verse 45: "**So that you yourselves may be the children of your Father Who is in heaven...**" [very important] ...for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." ***You live! You breath!***

- Who gives life and breath to even sinners? *God does!*
- Is God going to judge them? *Yes, in His way, and in His time!*
- Does He desire they repent? *Yes!*
- Is He willing to give them mercy when they do? *Yes!*
- Should we not do so with the brethren?
 - ✓ to love the brethren?
 - ✓ to show mercy to them?
 - ✓ to help them?
 - ✓ to encourage them?

I'm not talking to the elders so that they do this to the brethren; ***they're expected to do this!*** I'm saying this to the brethren, that you do it to other brethren. Just because we're covering this in an elder's conference does not mean that this is only for the elders, and what a bunch of unloving elders. I think you'll find it's just the opposite:

- they are very loving
- they are very kind
- they have gone out of their way in:
 - ✓ time
 - ✓ effort
 - ✓ money
 - ✓ prayers

*even though they have their own shortcomings and their own faults, which we all do; I do. This is for the brethren so that when we get together we **truly love each other.***

Jesus gives a warning, v 46: "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*?"

This gets into little cliques, and in bigger churches this is a bigger problem because you have a little group over here and a little group over there, rather than everyone really loving each other the way they ought to. It ends up that you have partiality that way. You should not have it that way.

Verse 47: "And if you salute your brethren only..."

You walk into church and there's someone you know real well and you walk up and hug them. Here's a person that you're 'policing' and they come up to you and you stretch out your cold hand and your cold eye and say, 'Hi, how are you doing?'; instead of going up and giving them a hug and saying, 'I know you've been going through a lot; I'm praying for you.' See the difference?

Here is the goal. It says in 1-Cor. 13 'when that is Perfect has come,' there's going to be a day when you're going to be perfect. But that won't happen until the resurrection.

Verse 48: "Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect."

The goal; the great goal! That's what God wants. It can only be accomplished with love.

- you've got to have *faith*
- you've got to have *hope*
- you have to have *righteous judgment*
- you have to have *all the attributes of God's Spirit*

But this is the goal, and that's why Paul said:

1-Corinthians 13:10: "But when that which is Perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside." *That's when our bodies, minds and hearts are going to be changed from flesh to spirit!*

Verse 11: "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child;

but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see* face-to-face; now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known. And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; but the greatest of these *is* love" (vs 11-13).

We need them all together! That's why I've said we need to:

- **walk in faith**
- **believe in hope**
- **live in love**

but "...when that which is Perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside" (v 10).

This is something we need to work at. It's not just an emotional or a feeling in the heart. It's not just a welling-up of feelings and thoughts. That's only part of it. Love is there, as Paul explains, in everything: thru thick and thin, good and evil. We're going to be facing every one of these things down the road; *every one of them*. If we can say anything to any *self-appointed* policeman of God:

- put away your magnifying glass
- tie your horse up
- restrain your tongue, except as you pray for them
- always ask yourself: Is it my business?

If it's not your business, don't get involved! Pray for them!

Let's see why John wrote so much concerning love. He saw what was happening in the Church with all of the gnostics and the antichrists and all the things that were coming through. We have to be on defense against the things that are wrong and evil, that is true, without a doubt. John talks about it and we are to know:

1-John 4:3: "And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God. And this is the *spirit* of antichrist, which you heard *was* to come, and even now it is already in the world." *Satan is preparing for his grand finale!*

Verse 4: "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them because greater is He Who *is* in you than the one who *is* in the world." *Not only for the individual reading this, but also for the individual that you are criticizing.*

- Do they have the Spirit of God? *Yes!*
- If they have the Spirit of God, is Christ in them? *Yes!*
- Can He help them? *Yes!*
- Can He change them? *Yes!*
- Can He bring about what needs to be done

in their life? *Yes!*

- Does He know greater than you, though you may know something about it? *Yes!*

Therefore, put it in God's hands, because Christ is in them!

We also need to watch this, v 5: "They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them."

There is a dividing line coming down between the people of God and the world that is going to be absolutely crystal clear, and the final separation point is going to be the *mark of the beast*. That's not far down the way. So, the final dividing line between the world and the people in the Church of God is going to be the *mark of the beast*.

Let me tell you something, unless you really, really love God, you may cave in to their persuasiveness, which will be:

- Don't you think it's rather silly that you won't take this mark of the beast?
- Don't you love your family?
- Don't you want food for your children?
- Don't you want to have a job?
- Don't you want to be protected by the government?

You haven't had any food here for a week, because you refuse to take this *mark of the beast*, you could have it and go down to the store right now and get everything you need for your family and your hungry children, and your crying wife.

- It's going to be hard!
- It's going to be persuasive!

Unless we love ***God with all our heart, mind, soul and being***, it's going to be most difficult, indeed! You have to give your life! But either way:

- you're already dead in Christ
- you've already given your life as a pledge

Yes, indeed!

Verse 5: "They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them." *That's why the Sabbath is such a dividing line!*

Verse 6: "We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us... [because they know it's the Truth] ...the one who is not of God does not listen to us...."

So, whatever we do, say or preach, print or publish, those who are of God will listen; those who

are not will not listen, but it's a witness against them.

That's why the book *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* has both of them in there, so it's going to be an expose` of things that are wrong and a witness against them of the things that are right that they should be doing.

"...By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception" (v 6). Satan is that spirit that is deceiving the whole world.

Verse 7: "Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God..." ***What I want you to do is look at that in context with the battle that is going on in the world!***

The way we're going to help people is not 'police' them. ***Love them!*** If they've done things that are really grievous, always leave the door open for them to repent and come back. Put it in God's hands and let Him handle it. ***He can do it!***

"...and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God" (v 7). That's why we have to, with God's Spirit, have our behavior and way of life conform to that. That's important. As a matter of fact, that's central and key to eternal life.

- Do you think that we can live forever with self-appointed policemen going around reporting everything to God?
 - ✓ Causing strife and confusion?
 - ✓ Finger pointing and accusation?
- Do you want to live for all eternity that way? *No!*

That's why we need to learn the love of God and learn how to handle it now and be perfect, as Jesus said.

Verse 8: "The one who does not love does not know God because God is love." ***That's the main characteristic of God!***

You've heard us talk about having the *mind of Christ*. But what is the first thing in the mind of Christ? ***Love!*** He had to love the world in order to come down here to do it. Not only did the Father have to love the world, but Jesus did! He had to have the right kind of love that He would take upon Himself the judgment that He gave upon all human beings so that He could rectify all mankind to God, in the plan that God had.

Verse 9: "In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, **so that we might live through Him.**"

This is why we need to pray for the brethren, that they can *live* through Christ. If we pray for

them, ask God to work with them, they still have—each individual in that case—their part. That is each one must respond to the prick of conscience that God brings to your thoughts when you do something wrong. *You must respond to it! If you don't, it'll come again!*

Every person has a choice to either listen and repent or to continue to resist and harden the heart. Then God will increase the correction to soften the heart, and hope that the conscience will be pricked with that. All you have to do is read Deut. 28 and Lev. 26 to see how God does that.

- *if* they repent, *God will hear*
- *if* they repent, *God will restore*

This is what the whole thing is about.

The Church of God is here to help lead people to repentance, to lead them to ***the love of God, the Truth of God and to stand for the Truth of God!*** If we keep that as a central focus of what we're doing, then God is going to bless the brethren, bless us, bless the things that we do. Then people will say, 'I can tell you're the people of God because you love one another.' Isn't that what Jesus said.

Not like 1-Cor. 14 where Paul said, 'When someone comes here into church, one of you has a prophecy, one of you has a revelation, one has a tongue, one has a psalm.' *I'm of Peter, I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollo, I'm of Christ!* Does that sound like the Church today? That's why we need this; "...that we might live through Him."

Verse 10: "In this *act* is **the love**—not that we loved God... [we've covered that with Job] ...rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the propitiation for our sins.*"

That is ***the love***. Our lives are totally dependent on God for absolutely everything, be it physical, spiritual, emotional or intellectual; ***absolutely dependent upon God!*** He has given to us:

- everything that we have as a person
- everything that we own in the way of physical goods
- everything that we eat
- everything that we drink
- every breath of air that we breathe

I wonder how many times we all breathed during the course of this meeting? *At least enough to get through it this far!* God has given it all! We need to understand that.

Verse 11: Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are ***duty-bound*** to love one another." ***Especially for the self-appointed policemen of God!***

who think they have a duty to snoop and expose and condemn and correct people they see having problems, difficulties and sins. They think they are duty-bound to do that. The Word of God doesn't say that! The Word of God says you are "***...duty-bound to love one another.***" That will help solve a lot of problems.

If you're *a self-appointed policeman* and you have been, in your mind and to others, snipping and carping against someone about some fault that someone may have, why don't you do an about face and show some love to that person:

- give him or her a hug
- spend some time with them
- say some nice words to them
- encourage them

I bet you would see whatever perceived problem you think you need to 'police' and 'correct' disappear! It may take a little time, but it can happen.

Verse 12: "No one has seen God at any time. Yet, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us." *That's the perfection!*

We're to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, and God is love. So then, what is He doing in us? *He's perfecting His love in us, which is reflected in the way we need to behave in 1-Cor. 13!* That's what God is doing.

Ephesians 2:1-3 says how we've all been led around by Satan and we're children of disobedience and wrath.

Ephesians 2:4: "But God, Who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us... [we're to reflect this] ...even when we were dead in *our* trespasses..." (vs 4-5).

He gave us life, breath, food, water, clothing; all that from the love of God!

"...has made *us* alive together with Christ..." (v 5). *I don't think we comprehend that verse in the relationship that God wants us to have with Him!*

"...(For you have been saved by grace.)... [not by your 'policemanship'; but by God's mercy, love and grace] ...And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (vs 5-6). ***That's our destiny! To sit there with Christ!***

Verse 7: "So that in the ages that *are* coming He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." That in turn goes to the world.

God has chosen to call *His* people to share in His great work of salvation for this world. God could achieve it on His own, **but He made us in His image and He has called us to share in that!** The greatest thing that we share is going to be the same kind of love that God is going to have to bring salvation to the world. How can we bring salvation to the world if we don't love each other now?

Verse 8: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works..." (vs 8-9).

- What is 'self-policing'?
- Is it not a work that you are doing?
- For what purpose?
- Did God appoint you?

That's why even the ministers and elders don't get up there and slam, bam, correct people right and left!

Where are the Churches of God now that used to do that? *They're not around!* Everybody has been scattered and you probably came from one of them and you're dragging in the baggage from where you came. Instead of allowing the Spirit of God to work, you're allowing the spirit of carnality and correction to work. Here's what God is doing:

Verse 10: "For **we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...**" *He is creating in us:*

- His love
- His hope
- His joy
- His patience
- His mercy
- His longsuffering
- His kindness
- His goodness
- His meekness
- His humility

Those are the good works!

"...unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them" (v 10).

Once you understand the commandments of God, which we all do; keep the commandments of God, which we all do—which is an expression of the love of God; but it's not the sole expression of the love of God, ***it's the beginning of the love of God!***

Then we are to grow in our lives in loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and being! ***That's how we are perfected in love!*** This is what God wants for us.

1-John 4:14: "And we have seen for

ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God... [truly] ...God dwells in him, and he in God. And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him" (vs 14-16). What will happen, God's Spirit will:

- increase in you
- increase in the other person
- increase in the brethren
- increase in the fellowship group
- increase in the congregation

and you will have the love of God! Will that be pleasing to God? Stop and think! In the history of the whole world how often has that ever occurred? How long did it continue? Quite a thing!

God trusts us to dwell in us! That's an amazing thing! That is a very humbling thing to contemplate!

Verse 17: "By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment... [it's all going to be added up in the day of judgment] ...because even as He is, so also are we in this world. **There is no fear in the love of God...**" (vs 17-18).

If you're going around 'policing' people, you're fearful because things are not exactly the way you see them, that somehow God is going to be angry and you have to take care of it. ***NO!*** You don't have to fear that. If you're loving God, it'll be all cast aside.

"...rather, perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God. We love Him because He loved us first. If anyone says..." (vs 18-20). ***Here is the test!*** Whenever you do something that is unloving and unkind, think about this:

"... 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?" (v 20). ***Remember where I started, 'No one has seen God at any time!'***

Verse 21: "And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother."

Everyone wants to be the Philadelphia Church of God, the Church of Brotherly Love. But I have yet to see any Philadelphia Church of God be the Loving Church of God. They all degenerated into '***God's policemen***'; whether from the pulpit or from the brethren.

God has given His Spirit that you live your life before Him. You're accountable to Him, not to any 'policeman.' In that then He trusts you with His Spirit to:

- grow in grace
- to grow in knowledge
- to love Him
- to be faithful
- to be loyal
- to stand for the Truth

I hope this will help all the *self-appointed policemen' to turn in their resignations in repentance to God!*

Scriptures from *the Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 7:1-5
- 2) 1 John 5:16, 13-16
- 3) Matthew 9:9-13
- 4) 1 Corinthians 13:1-2
- 5) Job 40:1-14
- 6) 1 Corinthians 13:3-10
- 7) Matthew 5:43-48
- 8) 1 Corinthians 13:10-13, 10
- 9) 1 John 4:3-12
- 10) Ephesians 2:4-10
- 11) 1 John 4:14-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 7
- Deuteronomy 28
- Leviticus 26
- 1-Corinthians 14
- Ephesians 2:1-3

Also referenced:

Sermon Series:

- *Why God Hates Religion*
- *Judge Righteous Judgment*

Book: *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* by Fred R. Coulter

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