

The Lakeview Lamp

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." - Psalm 119:105

June 25, 2006

Three Simple Rules

W. R. Jones

Recently, Jack Anderson, a well known correspondent, made a speech before the Washington Press Club. He was lamenting the declining standards in our country, and he said: "The greatest danger facing this nation or any nation is moral decay!" His advice was sought about how to reverse this devastating trend. He responded with three simple rules: **1. "If it isn't right, don't do it!" 2. "If it isn't true, don't say it!" 3. "If it isn't yours, don't take it!"**

I think he hit the nail on the head, and he stated it in a nutshell. Of course, those of us who study the Bible know that these rules have been in the inspired Word of God from the time they were spoken and written down. Those of us who preach and teach the Word of God have been screaming our heads off for years trying to get people to see what the problem really is and what it will take to cure it. Let's talk about the remedy for the ills of society. It is simple: *turn back to God and His Word*. But this is not what a majority of the people want to hear. They don't want to hear the Law of Christ preached, they don't want to open the Bible and read it for themselves, and they don't wish to discuss it with those who care about their eternal destiny, but they want the problem solved. Folks, we need to "back the wagon up." Let's get back to the fork in the road and take the right path. Our nation is bypassing the things that make a nation great. God said in **Proverbs 14:34**, "*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*"

"IF IT ISN'T RIGHT, DON'T DO IT!"

Nearly everyone I know recognizes some difference between right and wrong, although it may be very limited. They have learned a little from the oral principles that have been handed down from generation to generation, but they probably have never read the Bible. The only way to really distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, is to learn the Word of God. In the book of **Hebrews** we read: "*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*" (**Hebrews 5:14**). These rules of right and wrong are revealed to us in the gospel of Christ, the New Testament. They are called the "righteousness of God." Paul wrote: "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also*

to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, *The just shall live by faith*" (**Romans 1:16-17**).

If you are informed about what is right and wrong from the Word of God, you are most fortunate. This gives you a head start. When you are tempted to do that which is wrong and your tender conscience warns you, then just don't do it! Don't be a fool. "*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise*" (**Proverbs 12:15**). Obviously, this first rule will do much to eliminate your problems in life and to improve society in general.

"IF IT ISN'T TRUE, DON'T SAY IT!"

We live in a time when there seems to be a great haste to tell something about another person. Admittedly, there are times when things ought to be told. Wickedness, especially when it inflicts great harm upon the innocent, must be exposed. Sin must be exposed and condemned, and righteousness must be exalted. Gossip and slander are denounced in the Word of God. "*He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool*" (**Proverbs 10:18**). Again, "*The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness*" (**Proverbs 15:2**). If you have the facts, then speak, but speak with wisdom. On the other hand if you don't know the facts and if you don't know that it is true, don't say it.

"IF IT ISN'T YOURS, DON'T TAKE IT!"

Many children are not being taught to respect the other fellow's property. As a youth I was taught to ask permission before hunting or roaming on another person's land. My father told me, "Don't steal a man's watermelons. When you are on your way to swim in the creek, ask the land owner if you might have a melon. He will not only give you a melon, but he will very likely tell you where you can find the very best." Some people seem to think, "What is yours is mine if I want it." There is no stronger prohibition in God's Word than that against stealing (**Ephesians 4:28**). "*Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth*" (**Romans 13:9**). "*Thou shalt not steal.*" This third rule will solve many problems in society today. Remember, if it isn't yours, or you don't have permission, just don't take it!

bonus article

Open Letter to My Christian Sisters

Anonymous

Dear beloved teenagers, mothers, and grandmothers:

I love you so much, and this very difficult for me to write. I am so very tired. For so many years you haven't listened to what I've been trying to tell you. How many more years can I keep going? How much longer can I keep hiding things from my children and the other Christians?

I'm talking about my husband. He is looked up to by members of the church. He teaches a Bible class and attends all services and gospel meetings. He holds home Bible studies to convert people. He is hospitable and a very liberal giver. He has a respected job in the community. We have what I consider a beautiful home and fine children. He is handsome and has an outgoing personality. He is admired by many. He also commits adultery once every year or two. Wait before you pass judgment on this "hypocrite" until you finish reading my appeal.

We could be any one of perhaps 50% of the families in your congregation. I have talked with so many of these women and some of the men, and the problem is more prevalent than you may want to think. A lot of this problem – though not all of it – is kindled by something you just won't believe.

Why won't you believe me when I bring it up in Ladies Bible Class or in private comments? Why do you tell me I have a dirty mind or I'm a prude? I love you all, and I do as many good works as possible to show you this love, without taking precious time away from my family.

What I am getting at is this: Please, please stay away from my husband! I don't mean you physically should stay away, for we love your company. But I mean you sensually. He has enough of a problem without you fanning the fire.

When we are at services or in each other's home, you wouldn't think of dressing indecently; you each teach against immodesty yourself sometimes. Yet you wear skirts above your knee, and I see his eyes move up. When he teaches a class, you sit immodestly, and he burns inside. You wear round-neck blouses that may be decent while standing up straight, but when you lean slightly, it gapes open for a fleeting moment for him to fill his eyes. You wear slacks that hug around your hips and abdomen, and his mind races.

Who are you? Sometimes I see you in Bible class. I see you when we worship our Father together. Sometimes you are even a deacon's or minister's wife. Once in a great while you are even an elder's wife. It hurts me to see what you are doing to yourself in the name of style and how I cry when I see what it does to my husband. If I try to say something to you tactfully, you are filled with righteous indignation or laugh and call me old-fashioned.

So I go home and cry alone. The likelihood of his committing adultery with you is very slim, for you would be horrified at the suggestion. But you keep his mind in such a

sexual turmoil because you are some of our closest friends sometimes, I know he will eventually give up trying to fight it off and will go to a woman not known to the church in order to hide his shame.

No, I am not an “old bag.” I try to make myself as nice looking as possible at home as well as in public. I fix good meals. I try to keep cheerful. I feel I have always done most of the things mentioned in such books as *Fascinating Womanhood*. I am a good wife and dedicated mother; I work at it.

I also know for a fact that my husband is not the only one fighting this epidemic. The church at Corinth suffered from it.

I have asked other Christian men to help him, and once they see that I understand, they often admit that they have the same problem, sometimes under control, sometimes not. I’ve had preachers, elders, deacons, young men, old men admit this – and seem relieved that at least one woman understands their burden. Often they can’t tell their wives and daughters not to wear the revealing styles because they are ridiculed by them and other wives. So they keep it to themselves, and, as one preacher put it, “burn inside” because of the sinful passions they are so desperately fighting, with no sympathy from the women who bait them unwittingly.

Please, please listen to me! I have begged and pleaded in every way I know how. Our minister has, too; and every time he does, you feel like starting a movement to get rid of him, or you say, “Those terrible women!” without realizing it is you, too. You become frustrated and bitter at his false accusations that you are creating lustful thoughts in men.

Keep reading, please. Don’t cut me off. I understand why you don’t believe the men. I really do. Remember, I’m a woman too. You dress in the latest styles, with some of the characteristics mentioned earlier – maybe not all of them – simply because you like the styles. They are pretty. You enjoy the looks of approval from everyone – not just the men. Some fashion designers say that women actually dress for approval and admiration from other women. You think adultery is terrible. You think that only men with base morals would look at you lustfully.

Some of you think, “Not me! There’s nothing sexy about me – only my husband could think so. I’m overweight, I can’t ever go to the beauty salon,” and on and on. The reason you get so angry at such suggestions about you is that you know deep in your heart that you are not creating lust. You know this beyond a shadow of a doubt. You feel you are being falsely accused, and it hurts you for anyone to think of you as less than pure. I know this is the way you feel, because that is the way I feel.

But the men do not believe it! Please get it through your head that men do not think like we do. Jesus never said a woman committed adultery in her heart (mind) when she looked at a man who looked sensual. Women just don’t get aroused through the eyes. Usually we get aroused through our ears – a man opening up his heart to us, and telling us how special we are. Men are not that impressed by “sweet nothings” – in fact, they often laugh at it. Their key is in what they see, or are enticed to see by form-fitting suggestions.

Jesus said a man commits adultery every time he looks at a woman who looks sensual to him, and he can’t control those thoughts. It seems like every time I say something to

you about your hemline or neckline, you don't believe me. And every time I tell men that most women do not dress purposely to be a "tease," they don't believe me either. Men really do believe we women know exactly what we're doing and exactly what we're after. These are Christian men, too, remember. Why do you think our preachers get so hot under the collar when they preach on this subject?

These men know something women don't know or understand. And since you don't feel that way, you refuse to believe men feel that way. Years ago when we were first married and very young, my husband told me that the way a woman dresses tells men around her how she wants to be treated and whether she wants to be touched. If she is a tease, such as a Christian woman who lures and then shames men for having such dirty minds, he just stores those thoughts and goes to another woman eventually if he can't overcome those natural reactions. Men want women to look like women, to look feminine; but not to entice them. The comments are not reprintable that I've heard from men in restaurants watching waitresses with short skirts clean tables. But here are some comments I've heard from Christian men:

"How can you keep your mind on your lesson when those girls sit like they do in your class?"

"My daughter has really created some problems for me when she runs around in her shortie pajamas."

"Her dress hardly has a back in it. How could she come to church like that?"

"Did you see that woman in the fourth row?"

"Some of these women are plain vicious! They know exactly what they're doing!"

"I have to say a silent prayer or a scripture in order to get my mind off those temptations when I see women dressed like that."

"I look away as quickly as I can or I wouldn't be able to get control of my thoughts before they become sinful."

Dear sisters, obviously you are not completely at fault when you dress questionably, not any more than a bottle of liquor offered to an alcoholic is completely at fault. I have learned in choosing clothing that does not look like I am "making an offer," "When in doubt, don't."

Do you understand a little better? Run a test if you like and watch the men when a woman with immodest apparel walks into a room. Watch them closely, and you'll see what I've seen. We women will never understand completely how men feel, because we are not men and never will be; just as men will never really understand that most of us women don't intentionally entice them. We have to take each other's word for it, and take Jesus' word for it.

My last request is that you not try to guess who I am, or who my husband is. We are any one of several couples in your own congregation. Do not embarrass me or one of the others by asking, or even guessing to someone else. It is hard enough for us to hold our heads up without others knowing of our shame. When you see me a little depressed or moody, just smile, and I won't cry as much when I get home. If you suspect who I am, encourage me and talk to me about faith. And encourage my husband by making sure

you are covered around him – be kind to him in this way. He will then think of you as a lady – a Christian lady, and we will both thank you for your godly influence.

With my love to you, from a struggling sister in Christ.

“Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” – Psalm 90:12

Family News

Alex Bansemer is in Sewanee for several weeks. You can email him at alexbans@comcast.net or write him at:

Alex Bansemer SSMF 735 University Ave Sewanee TN
37383

Patsy Bronson, Jim Stubblefield's mother, received a pacemaker on Monday and went home Tuesday. It is too soon to determine how effective the pacemaker will be.

Mary Burnett now has some back problems. This is a new problem.

Elmo Ferrell is doing a little better.

Rhonda Hull had a tumor removed on Tuesday. Tests have confirmed it is not malignant. She is doing well.

Sandra Hunt has a CT scan scheduled for tomorrow. This is to determine if a previously identified mass on the adrenaline gland has grown.

John Jenkins, Robert's father, has lung cancer. He is not very steady now and is unable to get out. Some days he mostly sleeps.

Jennifer Lindzy, Fran Pickens' 33-year-old granddaughter, has or had cancer. Results of tests this past week showed NO cancer in her bone marrow. She has received 20 of 40 chemotherapy treatments so far.

Allen Malone returned home from Vietnam this past week.

Cotton Read had eye surgery several weeks ago (to put in new lens). His eyesight has now started to improve and should continue to improve over the next few weeks (for now his eye hurts). **Nancy** was not well yesterday.

Laura Reed continues to recover from a recent virus.

Allen Shivers, Melissa Gaw's father, was in the ER Wednesday night because of very high blood pressure. He saw the doctor on Thursday. They ran many tests and everything looks fine.

Robert Wray has cataracts. Surgery on the right eye is sch. for July 6th.

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: **Alex Bansemer; Malones; Stubblefields; Wootons.**

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"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).