



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 49”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



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John 12:27-28

27 “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

28 Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”

Thank you very much for coming to hear the message for today. Before we begin our next lesson, let us reiterate our reason for attending Church.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

One of the most interesting attributes of human beings is our desire to conform. I can remember an occasion, many long years ago, when my wife was selling Christmas crafts. Her job was to make the items; my job was to make deliveries. She sold a doll to a lady that owned a day care center, and I went to the lady’s office to deliver the doll. When I arrived, the lady was meeting with a group of other ladies. She knew that I was there to deliver her doll, and she wanted to show the doll off to her associates. The other ladies began gushing over the doll, and one of them asked me if my wife had any more dolls to sell. “Well”, I said, “I don’t know. Let me use your telephone and I’ll find out.” This was back before the days of cell phones.

I called my wife and told her that some of the ladies at the day care center wanted to know if she had any more dolls to sell. She told me that I should get as many orders for dolls as I could. I’m pretty sure that before I left, every lady in the place had ordered a doll.

I listen to basketball commentators talk about home court advantage. According to them, the reason that the home team has an advantage is not because the stars play better at home; the stars play well wherever they play. However, the statistics indicate that the role players, the second tier of players that come in from the bench, that are not as good as the stars, play much better at home than they do on the road. The positive reinforcement of the cheering crowd relaxes them while the disapproval of the road crowd tenses them. In a game in which the average winning score is less than ten points, a couple of role players playing well could easily be the difference in the game. Not only that, the crowd affects the refereeing. I just watched Dwight Howard foul out of both of the games between Orlando and Cleveland played in Cleveland, rarely playing over



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half of the game. At home in Orlando, however, he played as much as he wanted and rarely was in foul trouble. Coincidence? I don't think so.

Most people are heavily affected by their surroundings. It is a strong person that can refuse to conform to the norms of his environment. **Genesis 3:6** tells us:

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

Why did the man eat? The man was instructed by the God that created him not to do so. Unfortunately, at the moment that the man had to make the decision, the man's wife was there to influence him rather than God, and there is an old saying that the squeaky wheel gets the grease. We are all affected by the people around us. Although our principles count and our ideals matter in our decision making, we generally find it much easier to conform when faced by a united front of opinion. The majority generally has the strongest will. That's what "mob psychology" is all about.

How does the devil rule and reign over us? The devil generally seduces the most articulate and influential person by awarding them some type of short term advantage. In our example, **Genesis 3:4-5** tells us:

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."

What a seduction! How could the woman resist wanting to be like God? Of course, although the serpent gave the woman his personal assurance that she would be like God after she ate the fruit that God specifically forbade her to eat, the serpent did not give the woman any proof to back up his claim. But, you see, the serpent knew that he did not need to prove anything, because he had already given the woman something that, to the emotionally oriented individual, is much more powerful than objective proof. The serpent gave the woman the assurance that she could have immediate gratification. The promise of immediate gratification will seduce most people into whatever form of activity that you wish to seduce them, and will also cause them to seduce others.

Now, when Jesus came to the earth, He was given an objective by God that was not at all seductive. Jesus explained His objective to Nicodemus, in **John 3:16-17**:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

So Jesus came to save the world. What did Jesus actually have to do? In **Matthew 17:22-23**:

22 Now while [Jesus and His disciples] were staying in Galilee, Jesus said



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to them, **“The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up.”**

To save the world, God the Father has given Jesus the duty of dying, and not dying peacefully in His bed of old age after a well-spent life. Jesus' has been commanded by God to die brutally, cruelly, hideously, and horribly. This is not the kind of objective that seduces most people. And, it doesn't seduce Jesus. Jesus reacts in our text, **John 12:27-28:**

27 “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

There is a clear difference between the objective of Jesus and the objective of the man in the Garden. The man's objective was to satisfy his wife, who wanted them to be like God, by conforming to her suggestion to eat the fruit. The man's objective was contrary to the plan of God, which our objectives generally are when we are satisfying a personal desire. God tells us to follow His plan rather than our own personal plans in **Isaiah 55:6-11:**

6 Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.

9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

10 “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater,

11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Apart from our desire to do that which we think is best irrespective of the wisdom of God, our biggest problem in life is that we don't think like God. The woman was easily deceived by the serpent, not because the serpent was so seductive, but rather because her thinking caused her to stray from the plan of God. It was not that she did not know the plan of God, but that she did not think that God's plan was in her best interest.

Jesus' disciples thought similarly. You may remember an incident that we covered a few months ago. **Matthew 16:21** records:

21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

Jesus tells His disciples the nature of His mission. What is their response? **Matthew 16:22** says:



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22 Then Peter took [Jesus] aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”

When Jesus Christ Himself tells us that which He plans, how can we contradict Him? Well, we will contradict God all day if we don't think like God. We actually have the temerity to think that God is mistaken. Can you believe it? We think that God is wrong? How could we possibly think that the God in Heaven or His Son Jesus Christ is wrong? How is that even possible? **Isaiah 55:8-9** says:

8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.

9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

It was not that Adam, Eve or Peter did not know the thoughts of God, but that they did not think that God's plan was in their own best interest; their own personal best interest. God's plan in the garden was to keep sin out of the world and to keep us mankind connected to heaven, but Adam and Eve didn't care about that. They just wanted the one thing that God denied them. Jesus' plan to go to Jerusalem to suffer and die on the Cross was to resolve the problem of sin in our lives, providing us forgiveness of sin and eternal life, but Peter didn't care about that. Peter just wanted to stay close to the power of Jesus Christ in his own life. From our vantage point in history, it may seem that Adam, Eve and Peter all had really trivial perspectives, but we all have the same problem. The problem of our sinfulness is nothing more than our self-centered trivialization of that which God tells us.

The most important part of having God-given rights and abilities is having God-given responsibilities. Responsibilities mean that we have to look past our own personal, parochial interests to see the big picture of the plan of God for our lives, and for the life of the world. God gives us all free will, but He calls upon us to use our freedom with restraint, and to the furtherance of the greater good of the world, which will usher in the coming of His Kingdom. The crux of Christianity is our ability to voluntarily sacrifice ourselves for the greater good, regardless of the personal pain that we have to endure. Jesus did not want to go to the Cross, as He says in our text, **John 12:27-28**:

27 “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

28 Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”

The most important part of having rights is fulfilling the responsibilities that our rights bring. Many people who are activists don't believe this. Activist group members often believe that they should be able to say and do whatever they want in the furtherance of their cause without restraint. They believe that their opponents should be restrained, but that they themselves should be able to do whatever they want.



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Here is an example. College officials in the Indian state of Utar Kardesh have ordered that women would be banned from wearing jeans and other western style clothes to the college in order to halt sexual harassment of the women by male students. This rule was the reaction to the complaint of women that the Indian men were whistling at and making sexual comments to them. "Girls who choose to wear jeans will be expelled from the college", said the chancellor of the girls college in Dyanan Girl's college in Tampour City. "This is the only way to stop these sexual harassment crimes against women."

Tight jeans, low cut jeans, short shorts, mini-skirts and low cut blouses are being banned at an increasing number of Indian girls colleges to stop "Eve teasing", as verbal sexual harassment against women is called in India. But, the affected women at these colleges, predominantly between seventeen and twenty-two years of age, are protesting, saying that these rules are punishing the girls rather than the men who are doing the sexual harassment.

Let us analyze the situation. Suppose there are two women walking down the street. One has on a tight, low cut top and jeans cut low in the waistline to expose her lower back and upper backside. Her belly button piercing, the tramp stamp in the small of her back, and her pushed up cleavage are all visible. The other woman has on an attractive, but modest, dress.

To which woman will the "Eve teasers" pay attention? Which woman might they approach? Which woman are might they tease to see if they can "hook up"? The answer is easy. The woman that is showing off her wares. The woman that is acting in a provocative manner. The woman that is advertising her social availability. The woman that is dressed as though sex is on her mind.

It is completely unreasonable for a provocatively dressed woman to get angry when guys whistle at her and make comments as she passes by. If clothing is just another form of self-expression, modest clothes are expressing nothing close to a "come hither" attitude, but we all know what sexy clothes are expressing. But, in our culture, if a female worker has her breasts popping out of her top and a male worker says, "Nice boobs", he's bad, but she isn't. Isn't foisting your sexuality on your co-workers a form of sexual harassment? Is it reasonable to postulate that women can provoke men, but that men are not supposed to react to a woman's provocation? That's the silly thinking of immature women that want to flout their perceived rights to dress immodestly but avoid their responsibility to not tease a sexual reaction from their co-workers or fellow students.

Part of the failure of secondary education in our society is found in the fact that a young man in a classroom can't pay attention to the blackboard and the teacher's words when he is sitting in his chair looking at the lower part of a girl's back and the upper part of her behind. When we examine the historical learning environment in our most prestigious colleges and universities, even our historically black colleges and universities, we see those institutions were single



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sex learning environments, simply because of the difficulty men have concentrating on academics when they are surrounded by nubile young women, even when those women were dressed conservatively, as they were in previous days. Now, young men can't even remember what classroom that are supposed to be going to when they are surrounded by young women with their belly buttons showing over low cut jeans and short tops. And, if young women don't want this type of attention, they ought not invite it, as the Indian college officials say. And even if the young women want attention, the educational establishment ought not allow it, because sexual tension in classroom detracts from the student's abilities to concentrate on their studies.

A woman responded to the article in the news concerning the ban on provocative dress in Indian colleges. She wrote:

When I entered high school, it was the first year that girls were allowed to wear pants. Now, clothing standards have dropped to the point that girls are allowed to come to class almost undressed. I would have screamed my head off in high school that it is unfair to restrict girls from wearing what they want to wear. Now that we have had thirty years of half-dressed high fashion, and I have become older and wiser, I understand why modesty makes sense.

Our schools, especially here in California, are a complete disaster. There are many reasons for it, but requiring that girls dress modestly and that boys dress respectfully would be a good start at correcting the learning environment. Since hormones are bubbling like volcanoes, especially in teenagers, simple steps like this would make a difference. I would be for school kids wearing uniforms, because it puts students into a different frame of mind. Trying to get kids to sit still, pay attention, and get an education is difficult, as we see from our dismal failure in the last two to three decades in education. However, it is imperative to the future of our country.

Looking back, it amazes me how much my opinion has changed. It is said that the devil is in the details, and I must concur. The small things that I thought wouldn't matter at all have turned out to be very important, not only in and of themselves, but also in the fact that they are the building blocks upon which other decisions are built. It is really hard to see this when you are fifteen, or even twenty-five, but as I have accumulated experience in life, it has become very clear. And that's why you do not allow children to make decisions that they lack the wisdom and maturity that adults, that are supposed to be leaders, have.

Paul says, in **1 Corinthians 13:11**

11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

A childish person put in the position of Jesus Christ would cry out to God for deliverance from the Cross, but Jesus says, in our text, **John 12:27-28:**

27 "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.



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28 Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”

Can you imagine the type of torture that would trouble the soul of Jesus Christ? Just imagine the type of torture that would cause Jesus Christ Himself to cry out to God for deliverance? That torture would not be physical, as Jesus Christ could withstand any type of physical pain, but rather spiritual. We are physical, and the physical pain that Jesus endured was done as a show for our benefit so that we could develop some perspective on the true pain our dying for our sins.

You see, death for sin means separation from God. **Genesis 3:22-24** records:

22 Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—

23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.

24 So [God] drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Death for sin means separation from God. After the first murder, in which Cain killed his brother Abel, in **Genesis 4:10-16:**

10 And [the LORD] said [to Cain], “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground.

11 So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.

12 When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.”

13 And Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is greater than I can bear!

14 Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me.”

16 Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.

Death for sin means separation from God. But Jesus Christ was one with God, as **John 1:1, 14** tells us:

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

How is this Jesus Christ, who is one with God, going to be separated from God? Jesus tells us Himself, in **John 10:17-18:**

17 “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may



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take it again.

18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”

Unlike Adam, Cain, or any of us, Jesus has the power to separate Himself from God and then to restore His relationship with God after Their separation. But Jesus' separation from God was the most painful part of the sacrifice, because, He was not designed to be separated from God, even as we are not. Although we may not always consciously communicate with God, we are always in His presence, and His Spirit is always comforting us. However, the restoration of Jesus' relationship with God after Their separation from one another is the Godly act that provides the basis that we have for repentance.

Repentance is the restoration of our relationship with God. When the woman responding to the article matured to recognize the error of her youthful ways, and understood the counsel of her wiser elders that to dress modestly was not an infringement on her rights but the fulfillment of her responsibilities, her relationship with them, the society, and God, matured. God does not give us commandments just to restrict our fun, but to keep us safe until our thinking matures and to allow us to repent and restore our relationship with Him when we fail Him. It is true that sometimes fun is not the best thing for us, but love always is, and God tells us through Jesus Christ, in **John 14:15**:

15 “If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Jesus tells us, in **Revelation 3:19**:

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Jesus is under no illusion as to whom we are. He tells us through the lips of the Apostle Paul, in **Romans 3:23**

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

But, although He knows that we are rank sinners, unworthy of His love and sacrifice, Jesus Christ gave all that He had on Calvary's Cross. He gave, not just His physical life, but the everlasting link between Himself and God, and the very essence of His relationship with the Father. Paul tells us, in **2 Corinthians 5:21**

21 For [God] made [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

And once we have become righteous to God through our acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we then have the responsibility to mature; to grow, to understand, and to teach others the pitfalls of license and the benefits of maturity. Like those young women that protested the rule of modesty in India, other may be so pressured by their peers and so seduced by apparent short term gain that they are unable to see the benefit of acting maturely, but it becomes our job, through Jesus Christ, to understand and teach the wisdom of taking the long



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view and giving up that which we want in order to get that which we want most of all.

That's what Jesus did. He gave up His life in order to gain everlasting life, not for Himself, but for us, as **John 3:16-17** tells us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

So, as we go down from this place today, let us, as **Romans 12:2** tells us: **2 [And do] not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

Let us not ask God to save us from this, our maturation process, but let us embrace this, our transformation process, however painful we may find it. Let us resolve to follow the commandments of God whether or not we understand them, as we take on the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

Let us become obedient to the Bible, as was Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

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