

Basic Principles for Believers

Right after salvation, the believer must learn the basics of God's plan. He must practice and master certain elementary skills until they become natural to him. The new believer may not understand the system, but God has issued basic mandates which the believer must obey. The Christian way of life begins with obedience, not with perfect knowledge or understanding of God's plan.

Every believer is responsible to know, understand and apply the protocol or code of behavior that God had developed in the eternity past for the Church Age believers. The believer must adapt the various routine procedures of the Christian way of life. Obedience to these basic routines and principles in God's system creates and maintains objectivity. These basic principles are mandatory and designed to uphold the daily discipline of living in the Word of God. The basic routines are:

- Rebound
- Filling of the Holy Spirit
- Faith-rest
- Basic Christian principles

These six basic Christian principles are extension and application of impersonal love towards all men. These principles are designed to give enough room for the new believers to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Law of Love (1 Cor. 8:13, Rom. 14:3): This principle gives responsibility to those who are growing and advancing in the Christian life not to shock the new believers with their spiritual freedom (Rom. 15:1) by anything that can be mistaken as unethical or wickedness. The new believers who have no knowledge of the spiritual freedom of the Christians are going to be shocked when they see an advancing or mature believer doing things they supposed are unethical or taboo among believers.

The growing believers must be flexible in the nonessentials of the Christian life to carry out the plan and purpose of God. They must learn to give more room for others to grow and to advance spiritually. The virtue impersonal love toward fellow believers (1 John 3:14) motivates the advancing Christians to adjust and give way.

Under the law of love, the believer will refrain from doing anything that will lead astray weaker believers. The Law of Liberty (1 Cor. 8:9). Do not use your newly found freedom to drive away the weak and immature believers. Do not distract the new or immature believer from his wavering and easily distracted focus on Christ by opening nonessential issues. The new believer is totally ignorant about genuine Christianity and should be assisted in learning Bible doctrine pertaining to it.

It is better to exercise restraint and avoid becoming a stumbling block. Do not shock the new believer with any unexplained decision or action that he might consider as questionable. In most cases, it is necessary to explain the doctrinal reasons for your decisions or actions to a new believer who is watching you.

The Law of Expediency (1 Cor. 8:9): Do not use your freedom in such a way that your action will become an issue to the unbelievers. All Church Age believers are indeed freed from any power of sin but not from ability to sin. The Christians are free not to create an issue which the unbelievers can use against him in particular and against the believer in general.

The believer will avoid any action or decision that might become barrier for unbelievers to made decision to receive the Gospel. It is better for the advancing believer to exercise restraint or self-control when the occasion calls for it than to become an issue of barrier.

The Law of Supreme Sacrifice (1 Cor. 8:10-12): Do not use your spiritual authority so as to mislead others by using legitimate freedom. Those who have dedicated their whole life to the Lord are free to sacrifice for the sake of others providing them more room to grow and advance toward maturity.

To illustrate these principles, let's take for example the issue of alcoholism. Under the law of liberty, every legally and physically adult believer has the right to drink moderate amounts of alcoholic beverage, when an occasion calls for it, which the Bible did not regard or consider as a sin. However, under the law of expediency, the believer should not drink under witnessing conditions where drinking becomes an issue to the unbelievers.

Under the law of love, the believer should refrain from drinking when there is danger of leading astray the weaker believers. Under the law of supreme sacrifice, a believer is forbidden to drink alcoholic beverage when his life is completely dedicated to a specific ministry or leadership function. In short, the believer has to exercise the truth of impersonal love into his daily walk with Christ.

He is becoming independent from people and totally dependent on God but growing in love toward his fellow men especially toward his brethren and even the unlovable. The primary concern of the Lord Jesus Christ is the salvation of the lost and spiritual maturity of the saved. The believers must live on the same perspective and priority in which the Lord Jesus Christ lived (1 Jn. 2:6).

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others (Phil. 2:3-4). The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes (1 John 2:9-11).

The principle of fair judgment (Rom. 13:9b, 14:3b, 14:4b). The phrase as you love yourself is a mistranslation. The perfect righteousness of God will not set up so wavering and inconsistent standard as self. Self-love is not the standard for loving your neighbors. Neighbor in this context refers to believers residing in the same community. The phrase as yourself points to the source of love, the soul of the believers with Bible doctrine. This type of love emphasizes the subject, the one who does the loving. God commanded us to love our fellow believers for three reasons:

God imputed His righteousness to every believer which enables them to love any member of the human race. The imputed righteousness is our capacity to love others. God respects the principle of His integrity resident in each believer Christians must respect the righteousness of God wherever it is found.

God disciplines those who have imputed righteousness and He alone has the right to do so (Rom. 14:3). God takes out of our hands the responsibility of chastising believer who are out of the line (Rom. 14:4). When we judge others, we arrogate to ourselves equality with the Supreme Judge. Judging is God's exclusive business (Rom. 2:3, 14:10).

Biblical principles related to fair judgment:

- Separation from reversionist and cosmic believers who causes divisions, troubles or committing offenses contrary to Bible doctrine and divine protocol (Rom. 16:17-18).
- Toleration toward immature but growing believers for the purpose of their advancement toward spiritual maturity. The act of toleration provides more room for growth and winning over their weaknesses (Rom. 15:1-2).

Weaknesses in this context refer to their sufferings or crisis not to personal sins. Compromise with personal sins of others is an act of reversionism since it tolerates the personal sins. Virtue impersonal love respects the sinning believers as a person who possesses the imputed righteousness of God but hates their personal sins. Sins must be rebuked by Bible doctrines and not to be criticized under prejudice and biases. The hypocrite tolerates the sins but condemns and mocks the sinner.

There are five spiritual disciplines that we need to exercise to advance in the plan of God:

- Stay in doctrinal Bible class whether you like the pastor or not as long as he teaches the orthodox and old fashion truth of the Word of God.
- Remain in the local church that is grace oriented, dispensational, Christ-centered, concentrating on Bible doctrine and submit under the authority of the pastor teacher.
- Decide and be determined not to be distracted by anything or anyone. Do not allow anything get your mind out from your spiritual advance and concentration on the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Do not depend on your human strength and human resources. Divorce yourself from every form of dependency on man and learn to trust God in everything.

- Learn, understand and begin to utilize your portfolio of invisible assets. Use everything you have received from the Lord including the wealth, power, resources, spiritual assets and blessings which are yours eternally in Christ (Eph. 1:3).
- Learn, understand and begin to apply the eleven problem solving devices:
 - Rebound adjustment to the justice of God (1 John 1:9)
 - The filling of the Holy Spirit which is the power and enablement to execute the supernatural standard of life in the Age of grace (Eph. 5:18)
 - The faith-rest exercise which allows us as children of God to take refuge and find deliverance from the storms of life in His Word- (Heb. 4:1-3)
 - Grace orientation to Life (2 Cor. 12:9, Heb. 4:16, James 4:6)
 - Doctrinal orientation to Reality (John 1:12)
 - Personal love for God the Father which is built on rapport compatibility, on shared objectives, dreams, hopes and desires that produces the motivational virtues in the believers (1 Jn. 4:19).
 - Impersonal Love for all men which Impersonal love is based, not on rapport and compatibility, or friendship and attraction, but on the character of Christ. This is a sacrificial love, an unconditional love that goes beyond any manifestation of love whatsoever in the human realm (Gal. 5:14).
 - A Personal sense of destiny in which the believer finds that sense of completion and fulfillment in the plan of God. There is only one way to achieve this goal-- the path of sacrifice and service in the cause of Christ (1 Cor. 12:7).



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