

Living for the Lord

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[0 : 00] Now what we have in this chapter, particularly in the first half of the chapter, is Paul addressing to the Ephesians, and by extension to the wider church, something which we don't perhaps recognize just how radical it was in his day.

And that is the fact that believers, followers of the true God, were being called in the New Testament, as in the Old, to what would in that day and age be a radical purity. Radical purity, because we can't quite grasp just how much the idea of chastity, of behavior and of speech, and even of thought, was completely unknown in the pagan ancient world.

We think nowadays of lasciviousness and immorality and so on, as a result of a kind of slide away from what we think of as traditional morality in our land and nation.

But there is nothing traditional about standards of morality in any aspect of human nature. There's no part of human nature that is virtuous by its nature.

[1 : 13] What has constrained and what has restrained, if you like, the worst excesses of sin in society over the centuries has not been because once we were virtuous, but now we're long centuries.

It is the influence and the presence of the gospel of Christianity in and through society which restrained the worst excesses of evil.

And now as that has been peeled away, we have the kind of society that we see around us. But it is no different, in fact, if anything, the ancient world was probably worse, that can be imagined, than our society nowadays.

In those days, paganism positively rejoiced in immorality. So that which Paul is calling the believers to is what in his day and in every day, if we look at what human nature would be left to itself, is totally radical.

It is life-changing and transforming. Be ye therefore. Now the therefore, of course, remembering that in the original there wouldn't be divisions of chapters and verses.

[2 : 22] It's rather carrying on from what we would see at the end of chapter 4. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Be ye therefore followers or imitators of God as dear children of children who are beloved of their father. So that therefore, it's not simply do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Rather, the Christians are called to do unto others as Christ has done to you. You have been forgiven by him. So whether or not you've been forgiven by those you're quarreling with, or those you're arguing with, or those you've got a grudge against, even if you don't feel kindly towards them and don't want, you know, you want to do to them as you would want them to do to you.

Okay, that's hard enough, but do to them as God has done to you. Because whatever your gripe or your complaint against them may be, God has a much greater claim on you and me.

We have harmed and sinned against him far more than anyone else has sinned against us. But God, for Christ's sake, because of what Christ has done, has forgiven you if you're in Christ.

[3 : 44] Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to be like him. Be ye therefore followers of God. That doesn't mean just following where he leads. It means, in the original sense, it means be imitators of God as dear or beloved children.

Now, that's quite a tall order, isn't it, of course, to be imitators of God, to be as he is. That doesn't just mean, be ye holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy, which of course is what we're also called to be.

But as he forgives, we are to forgive. As he loved his enemies, we are to love our enemies. As he always practiced purity, we are to practice purity. Be imitators of God.

Now, to an extent, we all imitate somebody. We don't think we do, perhaps. We think, oh, no, I'm my own person. I don't imitate anybody. But we do. You know, subconsciously, if you think back to when you were at school, you know, there was always either this A-lister, sporty, captain of the team type boy, or the really beautiful girl who's so popular.

Everybody wanted to be like that. So they would start sort of wearing the things they wear, the kind of bag they've got, the sort of shoes they wore. Everybody wanted to be like that. We imitated the ones who were trendy, popular, you know, the ones who were, that everybody wanted to be around.

[5 : 07] We wanted to be like that. And to an extent, people will imitate what they see in terms of power or success, or this works for this company, or this church, or this congregation.

So we imitate what other people do. Maybe we're not conscious of it, but we do. Why do you think fashions change? You know, why do flares go out and narrowed trousers come in, or shorter or longer skirts, or shorter or longer hair?

You know, in the early 80s, an awful lot of women wore their hair sort of short and curled around the ears. Why? Because Princess Diana did that. And then we sort of imitated that, not consciously, not saying, oh, I want to be like Princess Diana.

But the trend was set. The fashion was set. We all imitate somebody to an extent. Even if we're not aware of it, our clothes begin to change to reflect the fashion of the day, or we unconsciously model ourselves on what somebody else does, or a style of what somebody else has.

And it happens in the church, too. It happens amongst Christians, too. But what Paul is saying here is, be you imitators of God. If you really want someone to imitate, someone to follow, somebody to be your ultimate example, look to Jesus.

[6 : 20] Look to Christ, look to God, as beloved children. Children are those who inherit. Not just sort of hangers-on, not just servants, not sort of acquaintances, but children who stand to inherit.

And more to the point, if they are truly children, all children will bear some kind of characteristic or resemblance, whether in character or appearance or whatever, to their parents.

They will look like them. They will perhaps sound a bit like them. They will imitate, again, however unconsciously, their behavior. So listen, if you really are the children of God, you're going to try and be like Him.

You're going to be more like Him. Be ye, therefore, followers, imitators of God. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, and offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling saviour.

You know, we're going to say, well, I've got to forgive these people who are bad to me. I've got to look at those people who are enemies, who are brutally treating other Christians, who are attacking the gospel. Well, how am I meant to love them? How am I meant to sort of, you know, be friends with them?

[7 : 31] You know, I don't owe them anything. No, but you owe everything to God. Think of what Christ offered up to God for you, for sinners like you and me. He hath given Himself as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling saviour.

Now, these two words, offering and sacrifice, we often use interchangeably. But there is a distinction here. Offering tends to be that which is, in a sense, a bloodless sacrifice.

It could be sort of the, we might think of the offering as the offering of Christ's perfect life. The lived out, the living sacrifice. His perfect example, His walk, His teaching.

This is the perfect life offered up. So that even if He had died, if we could say it readily, a natural death, then His perfect life could still have been an offering of how humanity ought to be.

An offering up of this perfect living life, living sacrifice. But He sacrificed that, the way that that word then is used, implies the putting to death, the shedding of blood.

[8 : 38] But a sacrifice and offering up, not only that perfect life, but the putting to death as a sacrifice, a payment in blood for the sins of others.

Without the blood of blood, there is no remission of sin, as Hebrews tells us. So offering the living life of Christ, sacrifice the death of Christ, which together pay the price for fallen humanity.

Because our lives are full of sin. Our lives, we always do things wrong, we say things wrong, we always fall short, but He never did. So what we want is that when we stand before the Lord at the

last day, He doesn't look at our life and all the things that were wrong with it. He looks at His Son's life, Jesus Christ, His life. And He sees that perfect life there. But mindful that our sins are there, some kind of price must be paid for it.

And the wages of sin is death. How is that price going to be paid? It's paid by Jesus Christ upon the cross. An offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling sabre.

[9 : 41] Now this idea of a sweet-smelling sabre, it's from the ancient idea that when somebody offered up with perfect intent and with faith, a sacrifice to the Lord, they would burn the body, the carcass of the beast upon an altar.

And as the smoke ascended, all the smell of the burning flesh and that which we wouldn't think, that's not a very sweet smell. Why would we think that was a sweet sabre?

But remember that man looks on the outward appearance. Our senses are not as God's senses. God looks on the heart. And as the Lord receives the sacrifice of faith.

Think of, you know, when Noah offered up that sacrifice after the flood. Noah built an altar unto the Lord. Chapter 8, verse 20 of Genesis. And took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

And the Lord smelled a sweet sabre. And the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground anymore for man's sake. Now, to us there's nothing sweet about the smell of burning flesh, even in sacrifice.

[10 : 47] But to God, inasmuch as it is offered up with a perfect heart of faith, it is sweet-smelling. Just as, you know, man looks on the outward appearance and Samuel, when he wanted to anoint the next king of Israel, he looked on Eliabos.

Oh, how tall and strong he was. And all the brothers of David. And the Lord said, I haven't chosen any of these ones. What I'm looking for is one who loves me with all his heart and soul. He's chosen David, the littlest, the youngest, the least significant in an outward sense.

It's why the widow's mite, as she shuffles up the prude in her tiny little two mites that together make one farthing, is more acceptable to God than all the largesse of the rich Pharisees and scribes.

Because the Lord looks within. And his senses detect and pick up and approve that which is devoted to him. A sweet-smelling sabre.

Christ is acceptable to God's justice. Christ is the perfect propitiation. That which causes to be favorable of God's love toward us.

[11 : 58] Now, when we think in terms of whether or not we'll ever be saved. How can I ever be saved? Because I'm so unworthy. Who are you to say you're going to heaven? Who do you think you are?

I am nobody. I know that I am a filthy sinner. I know that in and of myself I will be condemned and rightly so. I am not saved because I am good.

But because Christ is perfect. And this is the thing. This is the distinction between true and false religion. Between that which is of God, centered in Christ.

And that which is of man. All the other invented religions of the world. In many ways that might call themselves Christian. Is that the focus with true religion is upon Christ.

And the focus with that which is man-made is upon man. And what he can do. And his sacrifices and his prayers and his religious devotion and so on. If the focus be on Christ.

[12 : 54] He will never go wrong from pleasing and seeking the Lord. And he accepts his only beloved son. And if we are in him. And if we are part of him.

And believing and trusting in him as part of his body. Then we are accepted for his sake. A sweet smelling savor. An offering and a sacrifice to God.

For a sweet smelling savor. Or about fornication. And all uncleanness or covetousness. Let it not be once named among you. As become of saints. Neither filthiness. Nor foolish talking.

Nor jesting. Which are not convenient. But rather giving you thanks. Now. He's talking about the sort of lascivious sexual nature. Of much sin. In that day. And in this day also.

Notice the contrast here. Between verse 2. And verses 3 and 4. What is being talked about in verse 2. Is love. In all its fullness.

[13 : 51] Sacrificial. Self-effacing. Giving. Love. And what is being talked about in verses 3 and 4. Is basically sex. In self-gratifying sex.

The kind of which our own society. And that society too. Pagan Ephesus. Was awash. And nowadays of course. People say. Oh yeah. No tolerance and love.

Make love. Not war. But what does that phrase actually mean? Make love. Not war. It means. Don't sign up for the sacrificial discipline. Of serving your country. Of seeking to protect others. Just have casual sex instead. And that's what it means. It doesn't mean. You know. Invest yourself. In loving another person. It means. Just gratify yourself. And you can get to feel good about. Oh. You're not being militaristic. You're not being militaristic. Or whatever. And you can just feel that you're a peace loving person. As long as you're left to do exactly what you want. Most of us are content to live at ease with the world.

[14 : 47] As long as we get to do exactly what we want. And everybody just affirms whatever we decide. But this which is ultimately destructive to human nature and to human souls.

Where is the origin of it? What did God first create? God created man and woman in his own image. He gave them to each other. And he said to them. The fourth increase, multiply and replenish the earth. God ordained the marital relationship.

And marital relations also. For the mutual satisfaction. The one and the other. Bringing children into the world and so on. But when that becomes twisted. And perverted.

And spread abroad. Out with that bond. The damage that gets done to humanity. As well as to human nature. And to the soul. What is the origin of that?

[15 : 46] Is it God? Or is it the devil? Ultimately we know the souls. Oh well that's been a bit strong. We just want to enjoy life and so on. And the gospel.

But we don't want to be restrained by all that negative kind of morality. And that's the attitude of so many. Who do not know the Lord. Bishop of Durham wrote this.

He said. It's come to be taken for granted by many persons. That Christianity is not even a subject of inquiry. But that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious.

And accordingly they treated as if in the present age. This was an agreed point among all people of discernment. And nothing remained but to set it up.

And that is Christianity. As a principal subject of mirth and ridicule. As it were by way of reprisals. For it's having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.

[16 : 46] Now what he means by that is exactly what Paul is teaching here. That purity was radical in first century. You know Ephesus, Rome, Athens, the pagan world.

That purity and chastity did not exist in the pagan culture. This was something that only the followers of the true God practiced. And were called to practice.

And some of them had been called out of lives of lasciviousness and promiscuity and so on. But what the good bishop is saying there is that now people say. Of course Christianity is not true. It's something to be laughed at. Something to be ridiculed and so on. You know by way of reprisals. For it's having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.

Man without God is by nature no better than a beast. He is not a man. He is like a dog or a heath. He just wants to do whatever he wants to do without restraint.

[17 : 44] The thing that may surprise us is that this particular bishop of Durham. was a man called Joseph Butler. And the thing that he wrote this in. The book in which he wrote it was published in 1736.

Human nature has not changed. Its attitude to the gospel has not changed. Its impatience with the restraining power of grace has not changed.

What the apostle inspired by God is calling his people to. Calling the Lord's people to. Is this radical chastity. Radical purity.

Which is the opposite of what the world practices. And which becomes in itself a witness.

Fornication. All uncleanness.

All covetousness. In other words desiring that which is not ours. And where does that uncleanness arise from? Other than desiring for example. A man or woman who is not your husband or wife.

[18 : 44] You want somebody else's husband or wife or daughter or whatever it may be. Of covetousness. Let it not be once named among you. As become of saints. Neither filthiness.

Nor foolish talking. Nor jesting. Which are not convenient. Now this doesn't mean just sort of. Well you never tell jokes. Christians shouldn't tell jokes. My goodness. Mirth should never be part of the Christian gospel.

There's nothing wrong with sanctified humour. But the word that is translated as jesting here. Yes in the context. It probably could refer to unclean humour.

Jokes that are off colour and so on. When you look at the context. Verses 3 to 5 and so on. In which it is good. But the actual word that's translated here as jest. It doesn't mean so much telling of jokes. That are unclean. But rather it's a reference to the sort of. Veying witticism. Kind of vacuous. Art of conversation. Which was so highly prized.

[19 : 41] In society. And in the pagan world particularly. Nobody wants to sort of delve too deep. Into anything she is. Just to be able to sort of gossip away. And make witty conversations.

And to have sort of opinions. That would sort of jest about this. Or make an idle witticism about that. And to turn this way and that. That's really what the actual word means.

It's a reference to the kind of vacuous witticism. Of empty society. Society which has nothing in it. Of any lasting and eternal value.

That's the sense of jesting here. Foolish talking. As well as filthiness. Which are not going to be. They don't build anyone up. They don't do any good. It's just hot air.

And you've got to remember that. Just as we said. Talking about. When we looked at Timothy. In the midweek. Idleness. Is not only regarded as a vice.

[20 : 35] In the first century Christianity. But also as dangerous. Because when we are not gainfully employed. Then into the emptiness. The devil will bring his influence.

And that which is vacuous. That which is just empty. Throft or air. The devil will soon bring his influence. Subtly into that. What we should be.

Speaking. Singing. Talking. Praying. Working at. Is that which will be wholesome. And positive. And building people up. Not filthiness. And foolish.

And foolish talking. And jesting. Which are not convenient. Don't do any good. But rather giving a thanks. For this we know. That no whoremonger. Nor unclean person. Nor covetous man.

There's that word again. Desiring that. Which is not our own. Who is an idolater. And that means essentially. Worshipping the creature. Rather than the creator. And isn't that what we do so often.

[21 : 30] We wouldn't say. Oh I don't set up other gods. I don't set up other little grave images. And burn candles. And incense them. Of course I don't have other gods. And not religious at all. But that's because.

We make little gods. Of the things of this world. The created things of this world. Our hobbies. Or our leisure pursuits. Or our job. Or our career. Or our cars. Or our home.

Or our garden. Or our family perhaps. Things which may not in themselves be bad. But when we make them our be all. And end all. They become an idol. And we become idolaters.

And if we have that as our god. It is a god which cannot save. A god which cannot redeem. We have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ. And of God.

Let no man deceive you with vain words. Words which are essentially empty. Now when we go back to the garden. We think of how Eve.

[22 : 27] And then Adam of course. Were deceived. And the serpent said to the woman. He shall not surely die. And it wasn't untrue. It wouldn't drop dead that moment.

But it was a vain word. It wasn't the pure truth of God. It wasn't untrue. For that moment. For that hour. But it was a temptation.

It was vain. It was that which would deceive. If it was taken the wrong way. So here we have. Don't be deceived with vain words. For because of these things.

Cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Notice that term. Cometh. Present tense. It's not. It's going to come. At the last day in the judgment. It's going to come. And it's coming now.

It cometh. Present tense. Yes. These sins bring their own bitter rewards. And they are that which cannot help.

[23 : 24] Cannot build up. Cannot enhance life at all. That which is good God gives. That which we seek to make for ourselves in opposition to God.

But ultimately will erode and corrode whatever we have in this world. You see as we said a minute ago. This purity to which the Christian is called.

This chastity is something that was. It was brand new in the ancient world. In the ancient world immorality wasn't even regarded as immoral.

I mean the extent of sexual impurity. In Athens for example. In the ancient times. They introduced brothels there into the city. From the proceeds of those brothels.

They then built a temple to Aphrodite. Or Venus. The so called goddess of love. Now it didn't mean love in a purity sense. It meant love in the sensual kind of worldly sense.

[24 : 25] And sexual love in that sense. Now the very fact that they are content to build a great edifice. On the proceeds of that kind of trade.

It means there just isn't any moral compass at all. There wasn't any understanding of purity. Of it against immorality. Of good. Of it against evil. It's just whatever feels good to you.

Just do it. Man reduced to the level of the beast. But rather when the gospel comes in. You remember how in Acts. I think it's chapter 19 or 20 of Acts.

Where you've got in Ephesus. Demetrius the silversmith. And how he says that. Oh because this new doctrine is coming. People aren't buying the little silver shrines.

The Diana that we're making. And so our trade is affected. And so we want to stop this. And so there was an impact. Upon the trade in idolatry. But also if you think about it.

[25 : 21] When these ancient pagan temples. Which were staffed by. What we might call sacred prostitutes. People came when they made their offering. They had a liaison with one of these people.

And that was meant to sort of seal the sacrifice. Naturally it appealed to the worst and basest elements of people. Particularly of men. And of course it was very very popular.

And because of that. This kind of paganism flourished. But when the gospel comes. And men and women were called to purity. To fidelity within marriage.

And chastity out with marriage. All this kind of thing. Would be affected economically. Not just you've got a moral camp over against an immoral camp.

But as more and more people are won over to the gospel. The flow of cash. Into these immoral institutions. Begins to dry up. And so of course that's going to create a reaction.

[26 : 17] Against the gospel. You touch the pockets of the world. And you'll soon see how tolerant and inclusive they allegedly are then. But this purity has an impact.

It has an impact on the life of the individual. It has an impact on the life of his or her family. On their marriage. On their circle of friends. And ultimately on society.

It is that which literally. Radically alters the way we view things. Now when Paul says. It's not even to be spoken about.

We shouldn't even have this foolish talking. Be not partakers with them. It's them. These people. Verse 7. That you're not to partake with.

Whereas in verse 11. It's talking about the works themselves. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Be not therefore partakers with them. What he's warning the Christians against.

[27 : 16] Is not just don't mix in this kind of company. But rather. You can see what is going to happen to these people. You can see the judgement that they're under. Don't go mixing in with them.

It's rather if you've got the choice between the Titanic that's going down. Or the lifeboat. Which you're going to choose. All right. Which is me. It's bobbing about there. On the way. It's the Titanic. Well it may be listing in the water.

But look. It's still full of lavish apartments. And all the lighting. All the carpets. Look at the furniture. Look at all the food and drink that's available here. This is much nicer here.

Far up. Okay. It's tilting away a bit. Maybe it's going down. But plenty of time. Look at that little lifeboat. It's got no facilities. It's got nothing. No carpets. No furniture. And why would I want to go in that?

Rather than be on a lovely big lavish boat. If you're sitting in the lifeboat. You can see what's happening to the ship. You can see that it is going down. You can see that everybody who stays in it.

[28 : 12] Is going to be lost. So this is why we have to get off. This sinking ship. And persuade as many as possible. To join us in the one lifeboat.

That is going to save. And that is Christ. The only source of life. And redemption. And protection. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

If they insist. On remaining out of Christ. There is only one end. But rather let them come. And be saved.

Along with those. Who alone are saved by Christ. And his great grace. This filthiness. This foolish talking. Is going to be put away. Just as he says. In Colossians chapter 3.

Verse 8. But now ye also. Put off all these. Anger. Wrath. Malice. Blasphemy. Filthy communication. Out of your mouth. For ye were sometimes.

[29 : 09] Darkness. Darkness. But now are ye light. In the Lord. Walk as children of light. Now. Obviously the Lord. Is the light of the world. You know.

Let there be light. And there was light. We are the children of God. We are the children of light. But notice that he doesn't say. You are sometimes the children of darkness. Darkness does not beget anything.

It doesn't produce anything. Sin. Darkness. Worldliness. It's not an organic growing fruit bearing thing.

It is simply an end. In itself. It does not produce anything except death. We have this a little bit further down. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

But rather reprove them. And that means unfruitfulness in the sense it literally doesn't produce anything. So it's not you are children of darkness before. But rather you are.

[30 : 10] Darkness. You were sometimes darkness. It's not that you were the offspring of it. Or the result of it. You were part of the darkness itself. And that's what we are without Christ.

We are born and conceived in sin. We are born and conceived in darkness. Darkness. That is our human nature in its fallen condition. You were sometimes darkness.

In and of yourself. Part and parcel of the darkness. But now are ye light in the Lord.

The Ephesians. Or Ephesus to the ancient Romans. Was known to them. As the light of Asia. You know. The Ephesus of Aene.

It's a harbour port. As you come into western Turkey here. That was sort of the light of Asia. As though it shed light into the rest of it. In much the same way. As at one stage. In the old British Empire.

[31 : 07] Bombay. Was known as the gateway to India. Because that's where the ships would all dock. When they arrived there. And then all the railways or roads. Would fan out from Bombay. Into the rest of India.

And so on. So the light of Asia. But there's no light in paganism. There's no light in Diana of the Ephesians. There's no light in the darkness. Of immorality.

You were darkness. But now are ye light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. This is just as we say. The opposite of what it says.

You know. The wrath of God. Abides on the children of disobedience. But now as we walk in the light. So we walk in the light. That the Lord gives the children of light.

As opposed to the children of disobedience. As we read there in verse 6. For the fruit of the spirit. Is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Notice that where there is the spirit.

[32 : 03] There is fruit. Fruit remember is something that. Organic living trees and plants bring forth. There is only fruit where there is living form.

Living life. You'll notice. Remember that when Paul writes to the Galatians. And he talks about the fruit of the spirit. There in that chapter 5. From verse 22 onwards.

He talks before that. About the works. Of the flesh. In verse 19. But he doesn't say the fruits. Of the flesh. Because it doesn't produce any fruit.

It doesn't produce anything new. Any life. The works of the flesh are manifest. Which are these. Adultery. Fornication. Uncleaness. Lasciviousness. Idolatry. Witchcraft. Hatred. Valience. Envyings.

Merced. And so on. But the fruit. The fruit. Of the spirit. Is love. Joy. Peace. Longsuffering. Gentleness. Goodness. Faith. Meekness. Emperance. Against such there is no law.

[32 : 58] That is that which the Lord. His seed planted in the soil of your heart. Produces that fruitfulness. The fruit of the spirit. Is in all goodness.

And righteousness. And truth. Some manuscripts. Or some translations. Put the fruit of the light. Is in all goodness. And righteousness. Again the contrast of the light.

With the darkness. Proving. What is acceptable. Unto the Lord. Now well that says proving. It doesn't sort of mean. Bringing out the evidence. And showing. Oh look. From this argument. And that argument.

We've proved. How good this is. Proving means living out. Giving the example. Living out. As living proof. We are only going to convince. And change the world.

When they see. The results. In and of us. And that's a scary thought. Because we don't think. We're in a position at all. To convince anyone. By our lives. But often of course.

[33 : 53] You can see more clearly. From a distance. Or from outside. A change in somebody. Than they can see. Within themselves. And you know. I've mentioned this in the past. How with testimony. Sometimes. People worry about.

How they're going to break the news. To their families. Or to their friends. And by the time. They actually get round to it. They're already way ahead. And say. Well we knew something changed. We knew something was different. In your life. You could tell.

There was a difference. In your life. And they're not aware of having. Done anything different. But. It's there for all to see. Proving. Living out. As living proof.

What is acceptable. Unto the Lord. And have no fellowship. With the unfruitful. They're not living things. They're not fruit bearing things.

Unfruitful works. Of darkness. But rather. Reprove them. They're not styled. As fruits of darkness. Because darkness. Doesn't produce.

[34 : 47] Any fruit. Sin. Doesn't produce. Any fruit. It is rather. Self-destroying. James. Puts it. This way. Undone. This is the only instance.

In which you could say. That it seems to be bringing forth. Anything. In James chapter 1. Verse 14. Every man is tempted. When he is drawn away. Of his own lust. And enticed.

Now. What that means. Sort of taken with bait. You know. There's that which draws him. But Satan knows which buttons to push. In different people. One person might be tempted by saying strong drink.

Another might be tempted by illicit affairs. Another might be completely free of those particular vices. Or maybe he's got a real thing for money. Or gambling. Or doing bezel. Or whatever the case may be.

All of these different things. Different weaknesses people have. And Satan knows exactly which buttons to press. And he will bait his hook accordingly.

[35 : 44] Depending on what your different particular weaknesses are. Every man is tempted. When he is drawn away of his own lust. And enticed. Then when lust hath conceived.

It bringeth forth sin. And sin when it is finished. Bringeth forth death. We can talk in terms of conception. And bringing forth. And as though there's a kind of fruitfulness there.

But what James is saying is. The end result is death. It's more of an inward destructive effect. Of sin. It's only ever destructive. It's never constructive.

It seeks to take where the weaknesses are in you. And what may have been a tiny little cut. Make it into a huge gash. And a huge wound. From which it is much harder to recover.

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. But rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things. Which are done of them in secret.

[36 : 43] Now some translations again. Say a shame to speak of it. Without reproofing them. You know all things that are reproofed. Are made manifest by the light. For whatsoever does make manifest is light.

There's the danger of saying. Well we don't do these things. But like we're quite happy to talk about people that do. You know what they did. They were doing this. They were doing that. They weren't worthy. Yes they did this as well. And she said that.

And they were doing this. And we may not be guilty of doing these things. But we're talking about it. And we're kind of building it up. We're getting ooh-ing it. Ah about it. And so it becomes part of our mindset.

Part of what is in our thoughts. Part of what is upon our lips. And so the sin gets in there. Far more subtly than perhaps if we were actually doing the things ourselves.

But it's still in there. It taints our conversation. It infects the speech that we utter. And those who ought to be simply purely the Lord's.

[37 : 42] And those who ought to be simply purely the Lord's. These things shouldn't even be there. They shouldn't be in our speech. They shouldn't be in our thoughts. And the more Christ dwells in us.

The less room there is for these things. But don't rather even speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproofed are made manifest by life.

Let me just give you an example. We're not talking major sins here. But the upbringing that I had was pretty much suburban church going. Yes.

God-honoring to an extent. But we weren't too strict or serious about a lot of things. You know. The Lord's Day. Yes. We sort of paid lip service to it. But it wasn't a major thing. We'd still sit and watch the TV.

Or go and play football. Or do stuff with my friends or whatever. We wouldn't think anything about it. And you know. Drink wasn't a big problem in our house at all. But you know. There was always. For a certain generation.

[38 : 37] There was the decanters there. A sherry at the sideboard or whatever. And guests came for lunch on the Lord's Day. He offered a sherry or something else or whatever. Or my father might have a tank or a beer and everything.

It wasn't a big drinker. But it was always going to be there. And you know. There'd be plenty of secular books and stuff all over the place. And artwork. And maybe a few religious ones too. But you know.

We went to church. We weren't especially red hot Christians. But we'd have been regarded as good and upright Christian people. Because at least we went to church. And a lot of people didn't sort of thing.

When I first encountered and spent a considerable amount of time. With those who became my in-laws. One of the things that I only noticed subsequently was.

They didn't in fact bang on about the Sabbath. Or the Lord's Day or like a big thing. But in practice. Through all the times I was there. The TV was never on on the Lord's Day.

[39 : 33] Nothing secular was ever done on the Lord's Day. It was observed with worship. And with conversation. And doing it. The Christian activities that they did.

From that month. And that work. And that ministry. That it was all taken up with the Lord. And only afterwards. That's something. Oh yeah. They never actually mentioned it specially. Once.

It was just the Lord's Day once. It was separate. It was different. It was filled up with the things of the Lord. And it was so positive. And so good. And joyful. I never really noticed.

Oh yeah. I was free. I never thought once about it. Because it was just. It was just done. And lived out. As though it was the most natural thing in the world. There was absolutely no hint of any alcohol in the house.

But they never mentioned temperance once. There was no sherry sitting on the sideboard. There was no sort of offering of a beer. Or a little drink for a guest tonight. It never happened.

[40 : 29] It would be soft drinks. Or tea or coffee. But nobody ever mentioned it. Nobody ever talked about it. It's only afterwards. You thought. Yeah. There wasn't actually any drink in the house. I don't know. And to give you an example of.

In my previous employment. The language was foul. In the place of my work. And I was as bad as anybody else. Didn't blaspheme. But I was full of foul language.

And after I was converted. And I went to study at the divinity faculty. And so on. Yes. I still had to struggle with retaining my tongue. And not putting in expedience. But it was easier to do.

Because in that environment. Nobody's fought. They just didn't do it. It just wasn't there. It wasn't part of people's conversation. And so it became more natural for me.

Because it was natural with everybody around me. You see the point. It wasn't a big, big thing. Say, you must and must. Keep your mouth clean. You mustn't say a word. Nobody ever said that. It was just natural to them.

[41 : 27] And likewise with the Templars. And with the Lord's Day. And with all the other positive good things. The books that were on the shelf in my in-law's house. They were always Christian books. The artwork. It wasn't the kind of sappy Victorian.

Here's an angel. A sort of weedy looking. Jesus kind of being blessed. Or blessing somebody else. It was rather the positive kind of picture. The Covenanters. Or the Puritans. Or the Mayflower going. Or whatever. It was positive. Kind of unapologetic. Robust. Christian artwork. That was there.

Everything. Was about the Lord. And yet you didn't think.

Oh my. This is a bit heavy. James. Talk about fundamentals here. It just seemed the most natural thing in the world. And it was just done so naturally. It was just lived out so naturally.

And you came away thinking. This is how I wanted to be. This is the kind of Christian life I want to have. This is the kind of focus upon the Lord. This complete total giving to the Lord.

[42 : 25] That is desirable. It's not because anybody is ramming it down your throat. It's just the natural environment of that Christian home. Just the natural environment of that God honoring faculty.

Just the natural environment where Christ is honored. These other things just fade away. It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

So you don't speak of them. You just fill up the gaps with the positive things. You just live your life thanksgiving and focused upon Christ. With that which is good.

That which is wholesome. That which is positive. That which the Lord gives you to enjoy. And that which the devil would seek to bring in.

He'd say, oh yeah, this is much more fun. No, it isn't. The price ticket which is always fitting is always more destructive. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light.

[43 : 26] For whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he said, awake thou that sleepest and rise from the dead. And Christ shall give thee light. Now this is like a paraphrase of what we read in Isaiah 60.

Arise, shine for thy light is come. And the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth. And gross darkness the people. But the Lord shall arise upon thee. And his glory shall be seen upon thee. See then that ye walk circumspectly. Not as fools but as wise. Circumst means, you know, if you think of the term spectator.

Those who are watching something. Circum means around in a circle. So those who are watching. Circumspect. Keeping their eyes open. Walk circumspectly. We want a verse to describe that. The first Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 22. Abstain from all appearance of evil. Redeeming the time because the days are evil. What does that mean?

[44 : 25] That means that because there is so much in this world. That is vacuous. And empty. And vain. And doesn't satisfy. And isn't on-wing to the Lord.

If we fill our lives with that. Then it will drag us down spiritually. How are we to redeem the time as it were. Buy it back. Because it is precious.

Use the days. Use the hours the Lord has given you. For that which is honouring to them. To enjoy that which he gives. Yes. But to use your life.

Your hours. Your strength. For the furtherance of his kingdom. In however small a way. Redeeming the time. Because you don't have it indefinitely. The time we have.

The hours in the day are finite. The days of your years are finite. Buy them back. Because the days are evil. Wherefore. Be not unwise. But understanding.

[45 : 21] What the will of the Lord is. What is the will of the Lord. This is the will of the Lord. Even your sanctification. So even your Thessalonians. He desires us to become more holy.

He desires us to be ripened for glory. Ripened for heaven. Ripened for his presence. It's going back again to what we see in verse 1.

Be therefore followers of God. Imitators of God. As dear children. Those who are the children of our Father. Will begin more and more.

To look like him. To follow him. To exhibit his characteristics. To become as he is. Knowing what understanding.

What the will of the Lord is. God's will is the salvation of sinners. You and I. We're already sinners. So we're halfway there.

[46 : 20] So now all we need. Is to recognize the God. Who desires to save. To change. And to transform your life. So that it will not only last.

For the years he will put on earth. But it will have cause to rejoice. For all the years. Of eternity. With him. Let us pray.