



## The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

Volume 4, No. 6

Issue # 406

### **A Panoramic View of the Church**

In Numbers 23 and 24, there are a few verses that I would like to note that are the testimony of Balaam. Really, it is the prophecy of Balaam. There is one specific thought that I see in these verses that I would like you to notice with me. That is related to our view of the people of God. He says in verse 9, "For from the top of the rocks I see him." Then, he goes on to describe a panoramic view from a high place. He is looking down upon

the children of Israel while they were encamped in the valley of Moab.

The question I would raise is, "Do we have this panoramic view of the church and of the people of God like as portrayed here in Scripture?" Sometimes the reason why people do not appreciate the church is because they are looking at it too closely. Then, there are other people who are glad to hear me say that because they are hoping that

### **IN THIS ISSUE**

#### *Devotional*

**A Panoramic View of the Church** 141

#### *Presermon*

**Lying** 143

#### *Temperance*

**More Than Conquerors: Conquering Intemperance** 149

#### *Book Reprint*

**One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study** 160

somehow we will have an overlooking attitude and overlook people's faults and sins. I am not implying that. What this Scripture is portraying is that we should have a view of the people of God like God has. God sees people in their redeemed state and he does not see them with all the faults that you and I see when we work with each other day by day. This does not excuse sin, but it is an important concept that we need to have of the church

such that we see the church as a body of redeemed people.

With that in mind I want to look at several verses namely 23:7-10; 19-24. Do we see a picture of what Balaam is describing in 23:21, the Lord "hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob." The Lord, as He views His redeemed people under the blood of the covenant does not see iniquity. Beloved, we ought to have that kind of view of the church of God. We ought to see

Vol. 4 No. 6, Issue # 406. The Pulpit Exchange is a compilation of written sermons without commentary, published as often as possible, in the interests of promoting sound preaching in our conservative Anabaptist churches. All sermons have been transcribed and printed with permission. Names are removed so that we can focus on the message and content rather than on a certain speaker or style. (Names will be published in the next issue).

Messages have been selected on the basis of topic rather than the speaker. Messages have been selected from congregations or speakers within the Berea Amish Mennonite Fellowship, Conservative Mennonite Church of Ontario, Conservative Mennonite Churches of York and Adams Counties, PA., Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church, Mennonite Christian Fellowship, Nationwide Fellowship Churches, Ohio Wisler Mennonite, Washington-Franklin Mennonite Conference, and certain selected unaffiliated Amish Mennonite congregations.

We welcome submission of recorded sermons, topics, school meetings, writer's meetings, and special conferences by ministry and laity (where recording is permitted) provided permission has been obtained by the speaker for the recording. Submissions must have a title, the name of the speaker and the congregation responsible for recording (date would be helpful).

Published by Door of Peace Publications/Les Éditions «Porte-de-Paix» a conservative Amish Mennonite/Anabaptist publisher  
c/o Keith G. White, P.O. Box 104, Blyth, Ontario Canada N0M 1H0

Cost per Issue \$4.95 + \$2.50 p& h Canada/ \$3.50 p& h USA

individuals not only for what they are humanly speaking, but what they are through the blood of the covenant and what God has made out of them. It is a beautiful thought.

Numbers 24:5–9; 17–19, bring out the idea of their encampment. Summing it up, he is saying as he looks from this high place in the rocks and he sees Israel encamped, “How goodly are thy tents.” It is spread forth like a garden. He sees order. I believe those tents were in rows. I believe that is what he was saying. The tents were in rows and

he saw system and order. He saw people who were prescribing to a pattern. Then, finally he sees a people that will ultimately triumph. Is that our view of the Church? Do we have that high view of the Church, and that vision that sees the people of God ultimately triumphing? “Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion.”

May the Lord bless us with this panoramic view that was given to Balaam. May it also be our view and our vision of the Church.

## Lying

Each evening we have been looking at some aspect of life that we do not often look at before going into the message in an effort to build conviction. Tonight’s is in somewhat of a different direction than we have been thinking. Turn with me to a verse in Proverbs 12:22, “Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.” I have chosen to speak on the thought of lying just a little bit before going further. The burden rests in two directions. One is that I discovered over the years that there are individuals who do not understand what lying is. Then, they feel they lie when they have not real-

ly lied. Therefore, my burden is in that direction. However, it is also in the other direction too that we would come to understand what lying really is so that we would have conviction against that as well.

*First of all we would like to look at some things that lying is not* — some things that are not lying, is what I mean to say. *For example, a mistake in a statement is not necessarily a lie.* If I, or you would tell me something about an accident that happened in the community and you say “three people died,” and then later you found out that there were four people who died. You reported it inaccurately, but you

were not lying because your intention was not to deceive. Now, if it was significant, it may be right to go and correct it. There is maybe a place to do that. However, inaccurately reporting information where the intention is not to deceive it is simply, that you did not understand it right, that is not a lie. A mistake in a statement is not necessarily a lie.

Neither is a work of fiction a lie. Sometimes individuals do not like to read a book that is maybe not true. It may be true to life, but if the story did not happen the question comes, is that something we should read? Jesus spoke many parables that were true to life but were not necessarily factual and they were illustrations of truth. Therefore, that is not necessarily lying. The use of figurative language is not lying. When Jesus called Himself a “door,” that was not the literal truth was it? However, He was using a language to communicate a spiritual truth. It was figurative language. It was understood to be that. If someone uses figurative language to create a false impression then, of course, that is lying. However, as Jesus used it, it was not.

*Sometimes I discover that people with an especially sensitive conscience maybe stumble on some of the polite formalities that*

*are used.* Someone will say, “Well, how are you?” And you say, “Fine.” Then, later you think, “Well, my head hurt, my back was aching and here I told him I was fine.” Well, he did not want you to give him a physical report. He was simply communicating to you, “How are you?” What he was saying to you was “I see you are there,” and he wanted you to say, “I am fine.” In doing that you were saying, “I see that you are there.” That is simply a polite formality. He was not wanting to have a physical report.

Of course, if it was your doctor and he wants you to give him a careful analysis of how you are and you do not give it to him, then of course that is in a different category. However, polite formalities or sometimes someone who is late will ask you, “Did you wait long?” and you say, “Not so long,” yet maybe it was thirty minutes. Later you think it was long. All he wanted to know was if you were mad at him. That is all he wanted to know. You communicated that it was all right. It is not that he wanted to know the exact minutes and so forth. There are some of those things that we need to understand what the intention of the person is who asks, and what he is really expecting you to say.

*In another way, a statement that is general accuracy is not necessarily telling the untruth.* For example, if your father calls to you from outside somewhere and asks, "What time is it?" and you say, "It is five o'clock," but it is really two minutes till. Well, you did not tell an untruth. He did not want you to say that it is 4:58 and three seconds. He wanted to know about what time it was, and you gave him what he expected. That is being honest.

*Another would be that sometimes a person may say something, and then due to a change of circumstances changes his action and someone might say that he said the untruth.* For example Peter said to Jesus, "Thou shalt never wash my feet" (John 13:8). However, a few minutes later Peter was saying to Christ, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (John 13:9). What had happened? Well, there was a whole different set of circumstances. He had a different light. Therefore, sometimes individuals may say something a little different because of added light. It is not necessarily that they were lying. There is simply a change in understanding. I think Peter is an illustration of that.

Now, if we do make a promise, we do have an obligation. There

are times when we may promise something. I dealt with a man recently who promised me something in two days. When the two days were finished, he promised it in another week, and when the week was up it was another week, and when another week was up it was another week. You know, that does start to bring a man's honesty into question, does it not? Thus we see when we make a promise we have an obligation. What if I make a promise but due to unforeseen circumstances, I cannot keep it. Then I, at least, have an obligation to explain to the individual that I cannot, and to "square" with him and have an understanding.

The next one could be easily misunderstood and I want to be careful that we explain it. *Withholding a part of truth when it not necessary or expedient to tell it, is not necessarily lying.* Bear with me a little. Suppose a non-involved person asks you about a situation and you can give him a general sense without telling him all the details. That is not necessarily lying. However, if you leave him with the impression that you have told him everything you know about it, and you did not, then that is something different. Or, if the general sense that you give is

misleading, that can also be a form of not telling the truth. Or, suppose a school teacher, or a parent who carries responsibility in the matter, asks about the case and you withhold pertinent information with the intention of misleading. That, of course, is dishonest. This would especially be true when we would leave the impression that we have revealed our feelings and we have said all that we really know when we really have not. I personally feel that the Bible teaches that we do not need to say everything we know about a case to someone who is not involved and not responsible for it. The Scriptures say, "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (Proverbs 11:13). Therefore, that principle does run. Of course, if a general statement or details are chosen that misrepresent, on purpose, the total picture, then of course, that is being dishonest and is lying.

*Now, a quick description of lying in the other direction.* We looked at some things it is not. Here are some things that it is. There is a direct lie. When a child says to his mother, "I did not eat it, I did not get a cookie," when he did, that is a lie. When, Isaac was told by Jacob that he was Esau that was direct lying.

We have perjury where a false statement is made. Maybe you sign your tax papers under the penalty of law as having reported accurately but you did not report accurately, and you know you did not. That is a form of perjury. Even though you did not say anything. Your signature on that line declaring that it is accuracy is dishonesty and it is a form of lying. Now, I discovered a number of years ago that I (unknowingly) misrepresented something on the tax returns. I do not think that was perjury because I did not realize it. I caught it the next year and adjusted it. Therefore, there is that thing too. However, we are speaking about where that thing is done intentionally.

Then there are sometimes what is known as "white lies." I suppose you know what I mean by that. This is when it is worded so that it can be taken one way or it could be taken another way. It may be somewhat accurate but it leaves a wrong impression. For example, the child who told his teacher that his sister did not *feel* like coming to school. It left the impression that the sister was sick, when she simply did not want to come. Thus, it was accurate on the one hand, but it left a false impression. We sometimes refer to that as "white lies" and that is lying. *Quoting out of con -*

*text is also lying.* We may say the words of a speaker but we give it a different slant. We may say exactly what the person said but we through tone of voice, or somehow give it a different slant. That, I believe, is a form of dishonesty.

You will like this one. I read of a speaker who said once, "I like Canada better than the US with respect to Sunday observance." Someone else quoted the speaker as saying, "I like Canada better than the US." Do we see what happens? It gave the thing a different slant, did it not? When we do that on purpose, I am afraid sometimes that kind of thing happens just entirely too often. We give it a slant to leave someone else with a little different impression of someone else.

*Boasting can be another.* Overstatements about something that we did or something that we said can be a form of lying. *Flattery is another form of lying.* That is when someone will say something to you that he would never say behind your back. He says it to you to try to get your goodwill and he does not really mean it. There are also the expediency lies people sometimes do. That is as one skeptic who told another skeptic that a certain speech he just heard was unconvincing. Later, he met someone

who was a believer (or on the other side of the fence) and he said it nearly convinced him. It is a form of lying. I believe too that there are lies to God. There is such a thing. We make vows and then we do not keep them.

I would like to challenge us with this. Our churches have what we call counsel services. We need to be careful that we are answering honestly before the Lord in that regard. We have acted lies. Joseph's brothers showed their father a coat. They acted a lie. They showed him a coat and it left him the impression that a wild beast had slain Joseph when it had not.

Someone made a study of a thousand advertising executives who carried briefcases home at night. They found out that two thirds of them never opened the brief cases when they got home. They had only carried them home to impress the boss. That is all they did it for. Can that not be an acted lie? It is leaving a wrong impression. Sometimes, keeping quiet when we have some pertinent information that would clear a matter can even be in this category. I remember in teaching school sometimes you would ask students "Who did this?" Nobody said a word, not one word. They thought they were not lying. However, we

know if he knew he did it, and did not say anything it was leaving a wrong impression, right? That is a form of lying also.

You have slander and you also have where we wrongly impute vice to another person when we really had no reason to, or no sure reason. Someone might say, "He was a man of real talent to manage this business." He might then say to another, "Yes, but he sure knew how to "butter up" the boss." It leaves a completely different impression. It is slander. When we state as fact, our suspicions, if we are not lying it is awful close to it, is it not? When we state as fact our suspicions stated as though it is for sure, when we do not know for sure.

*Then one other one yet, this is what I would call self-diminishing.* It is mocked humility. Someone might say, "I sure did feel terrible about how I performed that job." They are hoping the person will say, "Oh well, you did not do too bad." We need guard that as well. Our old human nature is a little sneaky, is it not? Lying will always bring the worst, and will always lead us to things that are not good and wholesome. Lying eventually will catch up with an individual. Lying affects the character. It causes persons to doubt one's credibility. It leads to an entan-

gling. If you always tell the truth, you do not need to remember what you told the last fellow because you are telling everybody the same thing. Therefore, you do not need to worry about that.

Lying disrupts the fabric of society. Society operates on a foundation of truth. Some of us travel regularly into some of the third world countries. We cannot appreciate this point enough. There are some countries where deception is simply understood. You cannot trust. It certainly is disruptive. Lying leads others to think that truth is unimportant.

There is the story of some boys whose parents had told them that Santa Claus fills the stockings on Christmas eve. Therefore, they decided one evening to stay up and see how this happens. They wanted to see Santa Claus come and do this. Of course, as they were watching from behind the sofa why who came but father and mother and they filled up the stockings. The one boy leaned over to the other and said, "Now, if the story of Santa Claus is not true, how can we be sure that the story of Jesus is true?"

We see how that lying has a way of making truth seem unimportant. Lying can convict the wrong man. It crucified Jesus. It stoned Stephen. A tongue three

inches long can kill a man five feet tall. Lying affects our relationship with God. It is contradictory to the nature of God. Last of all, according to

Revelation 22:15, lying will keep us from heaven. I trust these few thoughts will stimulate our thinking in relation to the thought of lying.

## More Than Conquerors: Conquering Intemperance

We are looking at the idea of temperance, and the title is “Conquering Intemperance.” I) I would like to look first of all at defining the concept. I would like to begin looking at a number of Scriptures. II) Then in the second part I want to spend most of our time looking at identifying the characteristics. III) Then finally looking at some helps — practical helps to conquer intemperance.

I) The word ‘intemperance,’ is not found in the Bible in the King James Version as far as I know. We do however have a word which is a synonym. 2 Timothy 3 describes conditions which prevail during what it calls the last days. It calls them perilous times. Verse 3 describes people, “Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good.” The word that I am looking at is the word “incontinent.” That word means “to be morally powerless,” or “lacking moral strength.” We see some of

that today. We are living in the last days. The Greek root word of this word incontinent is the word *kratos* [Strong’s # 2904] which means “strength,” and the word incontinent is a negative word. It means “to lack self-control.” Temperance means “self control,” intemperance means “lacking self control.”

The second reference I would like to turn to is Galatians 5:22, 23 and this is a familiar Scripture. We probably know it from memory (or at least a lot of us do). “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Temperate means “to be self-controlled.” It is interesting again that it is the same root word in the original meaning “strength.” I like the word self control a little better than the word temperance because the word temperance has come to mean “abstinence from alcoholic beverages.” Now, that certainly is involved. It is how-

ever only one form of self control.

Self control has to do with various powers or capacities that God has created man with. The use of the word *temperance* in Galatians 5:23 indicates that man's powers — his capacities, potentials, what he can do, what God has blessed him with, as well as his will, must be under the controlling, operation or power of the Spirit of God. The fruit of the Spirit is temperance.

I will briefly list several other references. Perhaps you can study them a little further. Acts 24:25 (this is the experience of Paul before Felix). It says there . . . as Paul, "Reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." We would deduct from that verse that righteousness (right living) represents God's claims, and self-control is man's response to God's claims. The apostle Paul reasoned of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment."

Also 2 Peter 1:6 (the passage that talks about spiritual arithmetic) says, "And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness." Temperance always follows knowledge. Knowledge

brings responsibility. What is learned must be put to practice.

Another reference is 1 Timothy 3:2, 11. The word is not translated "temperate" in our King James Version. Instead it is translated "vigilant." "A Bishop must be . . . temperate." "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach." It means "self controlled in the area of emotion." Verse 11 "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." Again, the word "sober" means "temperate," and it means "to be serious minded and vigilant." It means to be watchful as a watchman would be — watching for danger.

On the other hand (on the other side of the coin) intemperance what does it do? It indulges the capacities and potentials God has given man. What does indulgence do? It intoxicates and makes a person dull — dull of hearing, dull witted and so forth. It is the opposite of being vigilant. I would like for us to see in the next few minutes that intoxication can occur by a number of different things, not only by drinking the wrong thing.

Another reference is in Titus 2:1, 2, "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.” The word temperate there has a more specific meaning. It means “to be moderate in our opinions or in our passions.” I want to enlarge on that thought.

II) Identifying the characteristics of temperance. I would like to begin by observing a general principle which I believe is Scriptural. Then, I would like to look at a few general areas: 1) appetite, 2) passion and 3) emotion. Those three things are examples of powers or capacities which God has created for man’s enjoyment, betterment, and fulfillment. This is the general principle that I would like to observe. Those things God has given us. However, God’s intent for those things is only realized when man is under the control of the Spirit of God. Temperance in all of these areas brings out godly graciousness and beauty. Intemperance in any of these areas, ruins both individuals and societies.

I would like to use an illustration that we would find in the Old Testament from Amos 6. It is a Scripture that I am not sure if I understand fully, but I do believe I understand it much better than I did some years ago. As you read down through here, what does it

mean when it says, “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion?” I am in Amos 6:1 first of all. Then looking at verses 4–6, “That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; (5) That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David; (6) That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.” Looking at verse 5, there was a time that I was not sure what this was saying about David. The Scriptures said that David was a man after God’s own heart. Why does it criticize those who do what they did? This is, I think, an illustration of the principle that I am trying to convey, and we could ask a number of questions.

Verse 1 — Is it wrong to take it easy sometimes? To take our ease and have a little bit of relaxation, is it wrong? Verse 4 presents a very obvious question, Is it wrong to take a nap on the sofa? Again in verse 4, Is it wrong to dine? It specifically lists veal and mutton. Is it wrong? Verse 5 — is it wrong to sing? Is it wrong to listen to music? Verse 6 — is it wrong to enjoy a good

drink on a warm day? I know it may specifically refer to alcoholic beverages here. We will enlarge it and simply say a good drink on a warm day, a soda or a fruit punch or something. Is it wrong? Then again in verse 6 it says they, "anoint themselves." Is it wrong to use deodorant or similar scented items? I think the answer to all these questions is obvious. The answer is "No, it is not wrong," but very easily we can indulge ourselves in any of these areas. We can go to excess. Those are excesses that we need to avoid.

1) *Our appetites.* God has created us with appetites. Sometimes we think of our appetites singular, but actually appetites are plural. There are a number of appetites. An appetite is an instinctive desire. One example is the appetite to eat or drink. It is instinctive. We do it to preserve life. Appetite can also refer to inherent cravings such as insatiable appetite for work. Sometimes we call such a person a workaholic. Appetite relates to a person's or a culture's tastes or preferences such as an appetite for elite or lavish lifestyle.

I might as well insert this now. I think it is okay if we feel a little bit guilty as we look at some of these things. *An appetite for an*

*elite or lavish lifestyle or a preference for the gourmet foods.* That has to do with appetite. It is not wrong to enjoy eating or drinking. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). It is easy for us to understand that a thirst for alcoholic beverages can easily be out of control. A person gets drunk. It intoxicates. It is addictive. A person gets addicted to that sort of thing. As I mentioned before, to some people temperance is all about teetotalism. However, it involves more than that. We agree that it includes abstinence from alcohol, but temperance is all about a lot more than alcoholic drinks.

What about eating? Most of us in North America [and the Western world] get enough to eat. I think that is obvious. Most of us probably eat too much. Some of us can get away with it. Some of us cannot. I think that some of us who can get away with it maybe ought to feel guilty. Though we may get away with it, this does not mean it is okay. I personally enjoy food. I enjoy cooking on occasion. However, I enjoy eating a whole lot more than preparing the food. I like Mexican food. You know what happens. The temptation is there, and I guess I will be candid

with you all; sometimes I eat too much. In fact quite often, I am afraid. When we eat more than what we need, I think we are eating too much. The Bible calls this gluttony or intemperance. I would like to challenge us to use self control.

*Another appetite that I will talk about for a few minutes is the desire to indulge our wants.* It might be the desire for more gadgets, nicknacks, labour-saving equipment, or a newer more plush vehicle. That is an appetite. I think we can call it that. Many manufacturers cater to this desire with a system of planned obsolescence. How many of you have heard that term, ‘planned obsolescence?’ Do you know what it means? It simply means that manufacturers, generally speaking, do not build something good enough that it could not be improved upon, because they are appealing to our general weakness. One person has called this gluttony and I think in some ways it is an accurate term. Manufacturers appeal to men and women’s insatiable desire for something newer, plusher, and better. Their sales depend on that. That is not all wrong. Competition is good. Improvement is good in some ways, but how do we respond to this pressure?

How do we relate to our own desire to make it nice for ourselves? Is it wrong to indulge ourselves? I would like to use the Biblical word ‘indulgence,’ for a brief example. The Biblical word indulgence is used two ways in the Scripture. The one sense of the word implies liberty, ease and relaxation. I believe it is God’s will for us to enjoy those things. One example would be of the apostle Paul and how he was indulged or he was set free. He was given his “liberty” (Acts 24:23). The Lord intends for us to enjoy those blessings in a temperate way. The other meaning of the word is “a filling up and a fatness.” In other words, indulging the flesh. I use that word *fatness* or *fullness* in a Biblical sense. In the sense that Sodom was condemned for “fulness of bread” (Ezekiel 16:49). What were the sins of Sodom? One of them was “fulness of bread.” Also Jeshurun was condemned for waxing fat and kicking (Deuteronomy 32:15). I am saying that we do experience indulgence. We do not have the controlling factors in our society that some societies have. We are allowed to freely travel. We can work the jobs we want. Some societies and some governments do not allow it. Therefore, we need to use the grace of God, and

the power of the Holy Spirit to control ourselves. I believe God's power is sufficient, Is it not? With indulgence, as we experience it, and our accompanying temptations, are we temperate enough to discipline ourselves and find a balance between asceticism and glutony? I leave that challenge here.

2) *Our passions.* Passion can be a virtue. It is what produces devotion to the Lord. It is what produces devotion to a spouse (or at least part of it). It can give a person enthusiasm, colour, or intensity. It gives them strength of character. On the other hand, when temperance is not exercised, passion is vice. I will mention some examples. *What about opinions?* One of the Scriptures we looked at, had to do with opinions, that is Titus 2:2. It zeros in on self-control and passion or opinions. Some of us have opinions. Some have more opinions than others. Some of us know which shelf in the refrigerator the mayonnaise must be on, and it is probably good to have a special place for it. Some of us know which vehicle manufacturer builds the best cars, or what tractor manufacturer builds the best tractors. Some of us know what Revelation 13 means. We have it all figured out. We have our opinions, and it is not

wrong to have opinions. However, it is wrong when we become intemperate and lose our coolness and our common sense and we argue heatedly and say vehement things. We become intemperate and we cannot listen to reason.

*What about anger?* This is another area of passion. The Bible says, "Be ye angry, and sin not" (Ephesians 4:26). I would like to suggest that there is one form of anger that is not sin. I will call that "temper." Remember we are talking about things, powers and capacities which God has given us. They can be either good or bad. Temper is what makes us stronger and more resilient. It helps us persevere for right even under negative pressure. As tempered steel is more useful than a mild or untempered steel, so a tempered expression of anger strengthens character. Let me quickly add what I mean by that. I will illustrate it this way. I suppose all boys pull weeds, but when I was a boy I had to pull weeds. I never liked it, but I had to. In fact, I like it now because I probably learned to like it. There were some weeds that I had to get mad at to make them come out. That is a little bit the way temper is. We need to get "mad" and I use that in quotes,

not that we express wrath or bitterness but temper gives us strength of character.

Now, the Bible lists two intemperate expressions of anger. One is bitterness. Bitterness is clearly an expression of the flesh. The Bible says, it is sin. Bitterness is anger that is bottled up for days, months and maybe even years. It destroys both physical and spiritual health. The second expression is wrath. We sometimes call it, 'losing our temper.' Or sometimes we call it a "Mount Vesuvius." When it is all over, there is a bunch a lava and ashes laying around. While it was happening there was a lot of fire and the Bible says that is sin. Harsh, unkind words and maybe even tools or toys fly around. It is called wrath and it is intemperate.

*A third area of passion I will quickly mention, is something I call "eros."* I will define it simply this way, within marriage it is an aspect of love, outside of marriage the Bible calls it lust. It is a very important and a very beautiful part of marriage. However, when it is expressed indiscriminately and indiscreetly or when it becomes mere lust, love becomes cheap and meaningless. It loses its value. In marriage love must be expressed temperately and you can jot down the reference 1

Corinthians 7:5. Additionally, temperance in this aspect of marital love will keep the display of physical affection away from the public's eye. I think today that people are losing (in fact I know that they are). People are not temperate in this area.

Temperance also defines how courting couples should relate to each other. Temperance in this area of eros is why we talk about the 'hands off policy.' I am not sure if I could turn to a Scripture that says, "You should not have physical contact as dating couples." However, it is a general Bible principle that we must be temperate. We avoid expression in some areas to add beauty and graciousness in another. And that is exactly one of these things. Refraining from physical contact until after marriage brings a richer, or a greater fullness and richness to that aspect of marriage.

3) *Our emotions.* Temperance and emotion. Emotions are feelings. They are what give us the capacity to rejoice with "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15). They enable us to be sympathetic. Emotions care about other people. On the other hand, when emotions get out of control, you know what happens — a person "goes to pieces." It is true that emotion is

very closely related to passion, but I would like to focus in a slightly different direction.

I will give three illustrations or three areas. One is humour, the other is sorrow and the third one I will call the spiritual aspect versus the emotional. I will explain a little bit more, later. A) *The Bible says regarding humour*, “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine” (Proverbs 17:22). We probably would all agree with this whether it refers to a happy disposition or a good laugh, and there is a time for a good laugh, I believe. In fact, there are some things that are biologically good about a good laugh. Long after the Bible was written, people discovered that the Bible was right. A merry heart is good like medicine. It is probably only one of the times when the body systems can go into chaos and some good is done.

What am I talking about? Well, you know what happens, or at least a few things that happen. When we laugh, the heart rate increases, blood pressure increases, and the face might turn a little red. There are also some emotional benefits. However, it is possible to become intemperate in how much humour we use or appreciate. We can become immoderate in how we express our amusement. I have seen peo-

ple becoming so amused by something very mildly funny. In fact, I did not think it was hardly funny at all, and they were almost rolling on the ground in hilarity. They were not controlling themselves. I wondered to myself, “What would happen if something was really funny? What was there left to do?” There was not a whole lot left to do, I suppose.

We need to remember that there is a place and a time for humour and then there is a time for seriousness. That is part of temperance to be serious, sober and vigilant. We become intemperate when we live to laugh, to have the latest story, to have the latest joke. We are intemperate also when we become so silly where everything seems funny. I have had that experience. I know some of you have had it too. It is intemperance.

b) *Sorrow*. It is very much a part of our lives. Since man’s fall there has been sorrow. We experience sorrow because of sickness and pain. Spiritual backsliding and apostasy bring sorrow. Death brings sorrow. Is it appropriate to express sorrow? If so, how? We teach our children that they do not need to scream as loud as they possibly can, when it is simply a little scratch. I think that there is a principle of tem-

perance there that I hope we can express as well. We are called to be temperate in our grief. I have observed funeral services, where the relatives of the deceased have screamed and shrieked until they lost control of themselves. Probably for days afterwards they were emotionally drained, because they did not contain themselves. The Bible says that we “sorrow not, even as others which have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13). I think there is a sense in which when we shriek and scream that we have lost hope.

Temperance keeps emotion in its place. I am thinking now of dividing between the emotional and the spiritual. I will give a couple of illustrations. Some years ago there was a young man who confided in me that he was discovering that he did not need to use a piano to have his private devotions. That might sound a little bit absurd but that is the way it was. I replied to him something like this. “You do not understand how to distinguish between the spiritual and emotional.” Do you know what I am talking about? There is a difference and it is very important that we understand what that difference is. Temperance helps us find our way through that.

Music primarily appeals to the

emotion. It also appeals to the body. It is appropriate that it has those different aspects. The songs that we sing in worship appeal to our emotions. That is appropriate, but emotion is not worship. It can perhaps lend itself to worship, but it is not worship. We worship in spirit and in truth. I have observed church goers get so involved in both the physical and emotional aspects of music that they lose control of their faculties. They may perhaps go back over the bench or fall out in the isle or something like that. That is not temperance. They think that it is spiritual. It is not. It is purely emotional.

I would like to say this very quickly. We need to be temperate in our use of music. I recognize that we do not worship every time that we listen to music, or every time we sing. However, our emotions must be subject to our spirits. That is why we are concerned about right music. That is why we have guidelines. Temperance keeps the emotions, and what appeals to them, in subjection to the will and the spirit.

The second example I would like to give in this example of emotion versus the spiritual is charismatic expression. We could possibly with a little time and practice, right here today

(and maybe along with a good bit of relaxation in this area of temperance) have a totally different form of worship service. I am not sure if I have the ability to do this, but there are some speakers who have the ability to *psyche* up an audience and get them so excited that they almost lose control of themselves. And then what you would need to do is start shouting some things in return, maybe waving your hands. I am glad when I hear a few “Amens.” I think that is appropriate. However, when we lose control of ourselves, and get all involved in the emotional aspect of worship (in fact it is not worship) in a service, we have lost grasp on that which is spiritual and that which feeds our soul or feeds our spirit.

The end result of such relaxation of temperance, and such an emotional expression is people on the floor rolling around. We may find all kinds of inappropriate physical contortions like the young men carrying the young women out and so forth, because they lost control of themselves. I will tell you one more thing. It all can be accomplished without any help from the Holy Spirit. I think we need to get that straight. The Holy Spirit is that which brings us into control. It does not cause us to lose control. Do we

believe that? We must believe that or we will become side-tracked. I am not saying that emotion is out of place. There is some emotion that is appropriate, and we should feel some emotion as we hear the Word of God. However, for the most part, we focus on the spiritual.

III) *Five things that are practical helps for us in conquering intemperance.* 1) *We need to call it what it is.* It is not a weakness. It is not a thyroid problem. It is not a chemical imbalance. It is sin. We cannot expect to have victory if we do not call it what it is.

2) *Remember that our bodies (if we are saved) are the temples of God.* It does not matter if it is gluttony, anger, or inordinate affection, it is sin, and it defiles that temple.

3) *Listen when God speaks.* We need to ask the Lord to help us control our appetite, passions, emotions, or whatever area of life it is, that temperance should affect. Then, we need to be sensitive to the conscience and the work of the Spirit.

4) *Avoid temptation.* If we have a problem with alcohol, avoid the places that sell it. It goes without saying. If we have a problem with eating, get out of the kitchen. Get away from the ice cream, put it back in the

freezer. Do not take any more. Put the lid on the candy dish. Simply get away from it. Choose the right kind of preaching and singing to listen to. If you are tempted to be angry, ask the Lord for grace. Take a deep breath, walk away for a few minutes. Do something. Avoid that which is sin in anger. I will assure you that your angry feelings can dissipate by the grace of God without your expressing them. In fact, there has been recent studies that have proven this. I do not know why they need studies — the Word of God says it.

People used to say, “If you are angry, you have to get rid of it. Have your children sock it out on that pillow. Call the pillow ‘mommy’ and sock it out on that pillow.” Or, “If you have a friend you do not like, and are angry at — you have an enemy, not a friend, take it out on the pillow,

call it ‘George,’ your enemy. Sock your feelings out on it.” Studies have now proven what the Bible has said all along. Anger is actually increased, or augmented when we express it. That is sin.

5) Discipline yourself, by the grace of God. Add this too, discipline your children. We do our children a big favour if we teach them self-control. I would like to use one more Scripture yet. 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 is a Scripture that we really need to look at. I will not read all the verses. I will only use verse 25 and we will close with this. “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.” God help us. God bless us that we would be able to keep our bodies.

### Scripture References

<b>Numbers</b>		<b>Ezekiel</b>		<b>1 Corinthians</b>	
23:7–10	142	16:49	153	7:5	155
23:9	141		<b>Amos</b>	9:24–27	159
23:19–24	142	6:1	151	10:31	152
23:21	142	6:4–6	151		<b>Galatians</b>
24:5–9	143		<b>John</b>	5:22	149
24:17–19	143	13:8, 9	145	5:23	150
			<b>Acts</b>		<b>Ephesians</b>
<b>Deuteronomy</b>		24:23	153	4:26	154
32:15	153	24:25	150		<b>1 Thessalonians</b>
			<b>Romans</b>	4:13	157
<b>Proverbs</b>		12:15	155		<b>1 Timothy</b>
11:13	146				
12:22	143				
17:22	143				

3:2, 11	150	2:1, 2	150	<b>Revelation</b>	
<b>2 Timothy</b>		2:2	154	22:15	149
3:3	149	<b>2 Peter</b>			
<b>Titus</b>		1:6	150		

## From the Previous Issue:

### Adjusting to Life's Changes: Decreasing Responsibilities

From a message by David G. Weaver

Sunday, April 18, 2004

Orchardville Mennonite Church

### Reaffirming Our Position on Youth Activities

From a sermon by James J. Martin

SEMIANNUAL CONFERRING MEETING

WHITE OAK MENNONITE CHURCH

September 28, 1995

## Book Reprint (Continued)

### One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study

#### LESSON 7.

## Our Lord's Parables.

NOTE: — In the following list of parables, no reference is made to time or place. A number of minor parables were omitted.

#### 1.

*Parable:* Building of houses on rock and sand.

*References:* Matthew 7:24–27; Luke 6:47–49.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the multitudes.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Hope of reward and fear of punishment are strong incentives to bring sinners to a sense of duty.

*Lessons for Us:* “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only,

deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22; 4:17).

#### 2.

*Parable:* The sower and the seed.

*References:* Matthew 13:1–8; Mark 4:1–25; Luke 8:4–15.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the multitude.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Matthew 13:10–15.

*Lessons for Us:* The effect of the Gospel upon our hearts depends upon the preparation we make for the reception of the same.

#### 3.

*Parable:* The tares.

*References:* Matthew 13:24–30.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the multitude.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Matthew 13:10–15.

*Lessons for Us:* When Christians sleep, the enemy sows his seeds of wickedness. Therefore, “Let us watch and be sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:6).

4.

*Parable:* The mustard seed.

*References:* Matthew 13:31, 32; Mark 30:20, 21.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the multitude.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Matthew 13:10–15.

*Lessons for Us:* A single righteous thought or deed may, by God’s grace, grow into abundant devotion or benevolence.

5.

*Parable:* The leaven.

*References:* Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20, 21.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the multitude.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Matthew 13:10–15.

*Lessons for Us:* “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (1 Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:9). Let this be the leaven of righteousness.

6.

*Parable:* The hidden treasure

*References:* Matthew 13:44

*To Whom Spoken:* To the multitude.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Matthew 13:10–15.

*Lessons for Us:* The true Christian gives up all for Christ. (Matthew 19:21, 27).

7.

*Parable:* The candle.

*References:* Matthew 5:15; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16, 17.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the disciples. To the multitude.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Tendency of man to shrink from public reproach.

*Lessons for Us:* Our lives should reflect the life of God in the soul.

8.

*Parable:* The son asking for food

*References:* Matthew 7:9–11; Luke 11:11–13.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the disciples.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Tendency to despair of success.

*Lessons for Us:* The wonders of prevailing prayer.

9.

*Parable:* The pearl of great price

*References:* Matthew 13:45, 46.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the multitude.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Matthew 13:10–15.

*Lessons for Us:* “What shall it

profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

10.

*Parable:* The draw net.

*References:* Matthew 13:47–50.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the multitude.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Matthew 13:10–15.

*Lessons for Us:* "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

11.

*Parable:* The unmerciful servant.

*References:* Matthew 18:23–35.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the disciples.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* The tendency on the part of the disciples, to make law out of something that should be a living principle of the heart.

*Lessons for Us:* God forgives us in the same way that we forgive those who have wronged us. There is danger in God judging us for an inward revengeful feeling, even if we have outwardly forgiven. Let forgiveness spring from the heart.

12.

*Parable:* The vineyard.

*References:* Matthew 20:1–16.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the disciples.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Their proneness to feel exalted because of their position.

*Lessons for Us:* Jews, Gentiles,

rich, poor, intelligent, ignorant, strong, weak, old, young — all people in every age and clime, may rest assured that God is no respecter of persons.

13.

*Parable:* The two sons.

*References:* Matthew 20:1–16.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the Pharisees.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Their hypocritical pretensions to piety.

*Lessons for Us:* A humble and unpretentious Christian life speaks louder before God than a life abounding in loud profession and little action.

14.

*Parable:* The wicked husbandman.

*References:* Matthew 21:36–46; Mark 12:1–12; Luke 20:9–16.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the Pharisees.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Their hypocritical pretensions to piety.

*Lessons for Us:* It is possible for pretended Christians to be among God's worst enemies.

15.

*Parable:* The marriage of the king's son.

*References:* Matthew 22:1–14.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the Pharisees.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:* Their hypocritical pretensions to piety.

*Lessons for Us:* It is dangerous to refuse God's invitation. Hypocrites will finally be expelled from the feast of glory.

16.

*Parable:* The ten virgins.

*References:* Matthew 25:1–13.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the disciples.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:*

Tendency on the part of man, to put off the day of salvation.

*Lessons for Us:* Let our hearts be continually filled with "oil of grace," that we may be ready to meet the Bridegroom at any time.

17.

*Parable:* The fig tree.

*References:* Matthew:32–34; Mark 13:28–30; Luke 21:29–32.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the disciples.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:*

Tendency on the part of man, to put off the day of salvation.

*Lessons for Us:* From the signs of the times, we conclude that Christ may come at any time.

18.

*Parable:* The talents.

*References:* Matthew 25:14–30.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the disciples.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:*

Tendency on the part of man, to put off the day of salvation.

*Lessons for Us:* The Lord rewards faithfulness rather than natural endowment.

19.

*Parable:* The sheep and the goats.

*References:* Matthew 25:31–46.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the disciples.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:*

Tendency on the part of man, to put off the day of salvation.

*Lessons for Us:* It is ours to say in this day of grace as to how we shall be turned in that day.

20.

*Parable:* The lost sheep.

*References:* Matthew 18:12–24.

*To Whom Spoken:* To the disciples.\* To the Pharisees.

*The Apparent Need of the Parable:*

Man often censures when he ought to sympathize and rescue.

*Lessons for Us:* God has compassion on His wayward children. The conditions of the lost should arouse our sympathy rather than indignation.

NOTE: — \* Seems to have been used on two separate occasions.

1. What is a parable?
2. What advantage is there in teaching by parables?
3. Compare the parable of the "Sower" and of the "Tares."
4. What does the "leaven" represent in parable 5?
5. Who are the "ninety and nine" in parable 20?



## Catalogue

Sermons transcribed and available on various topics.

Volumes 1 – 8 available.

*Back Issues Available*

*Ministry Topics*

*Special Meetings Available*

*Book Reprints are available*

- 100 Lessons in Bible Study
- A Talk With Church Members
- Bible Wines: Laws of

Fermentation

- Christian Attire
- Christianity and Dress
- Christ, The Apostles and Wine
- Dress: A Brief Treatise
- The Ideal Christian Home
- The Ministry
- The Temperate Life
- Wordly Conformity in Dress

**New Series:**

***Practical Nonconformity***

Vol 1 — The Christian, Cards, Contests, Games, and Other Amusements.

*Others Currently in Progress:*

10 Commandments  
Exposition of Colossians  
Nonresistance Meetings  
Writer's Meetings  
Literature Evangelism  
Various Fellowship Meetings  
Garden City Confession of Faith

Children's book:

**The Folly of Procrastination**

*Full Catalogue available*