

Christian Conduct

Our conduct (daily actions) as a Christian can be molded by our parents, society, education, or by God's word. What is our Christian conduct supposed to be like?

Our conduct is supposed to be an example (image, imprint, pattern) for others to follow (1 Timothy 4:12), like church leaders (Hebrews 13:7). Our conduct is supposed to be wise (skilled, learned) before others (James 3:13), like the apostles (2 Corinthians 1:12). Our conduct is supposed to be holy (set apart) before others (1 Peter 1:13-16). We are to be separate from what is unclean (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Our conduct is supposed to be honorable (moral goodness) before others (1 Peter 2:12). We are to live honestly (Hebrews 13:18). Our conduct is supposed to be chaste (pure, clean) before others (1 Peter 3:1-2). The church is a pure virgin to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2). We are to have pure thinking (Philippians 4:8; James 3:17) and be pure like Jesus (1 John 3:3). Our conduct is supposed to be good (intrinsic goodness, beneficial effect) in the site of others (1 Peter 3:15-16).

Is your conduct in harmony with God's word or with the people around you? Is your conduct the "old man" or the "new man"? And what will your conduct be when the Lord returns (2 Peter 3:16)? Remember, Paul wrote: "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27). - *Chris Reeves*

News and Notes

- September 21-24: Gospel meeting with Tim Haile, 7 pm weeknights, regular times on Sunday.
- Here are two families in need after hurricane Harvey:
David Kibodeaux
727 Lyndale St.
Vidor, TX 77662

Garrett Foxworth
3614 FM 1136
Orange, TX 77632

Warfield Blvd. church of Christ
290 Warfield Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37043

Website
WBCOC.org

Assembly Times
Sunday: 9:30 am, 10:30 am, 6 pm
Wednesday: 7 pm

Everyone Is Welcome!
For More Information Call
(931) 647-1324

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THE WARFIELD BULLETIN

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Following many violent crime cases, members of the press will invariably interview victims, or family members of deceased or traumatized victims. The emotion-packed testimonials make for great television, hence the interviews. We recently saw this done in the case of the Ohio man who Facebook broadcast his killing of a helpless elderly man. The crime was atrocious. The murderer later committed suicide after being pursued by police in Pennsylvania.

Like many people in similar interviews, some of those who were interviewed about this killing said that they had already *forgiven* the murderer of his wrongdoing. They said this without knowing whether the killer was at all remorseful or penitent or not. Many people believe that they are doing the right and noble thing by automatically forgiving others of their sins and crimes regardless of the attitude and actions of those whom they are forgiving.

But are we authorized to forgive those who have no remorse for what they have done and have made no change in their behavior? Are we to automatically forgive others? Let us see how the Bible answers these questions. Jesus taught:

“Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother

sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4).

Though this may sound strange to some people, Jesus plainly taught that forgiveness is *conditional* — it is NOT automatic. Forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance. Jesus said “if” the sinner repents, forgive him. The word “if” is a word of conditionality. Jesus commands us to forgive the penitent, but He does not authorize us to forgive the obstinate, unremorseful, and unrepentant. We must indeed be *ready and willing* to forgive the sinner, but actual forgiveness is divinely conditioned upon repentance.

God’s Example

There is no greater forgiver than God, but God does not forgive the unrepentant! Referring to the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, Jesus said, *“Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:1-3).*

The gospel message is “repent or perish!” Some may at this point be reminded of

the words of Jesus on the cross, *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34)*. But would God grant this forgiveness *automatically and unconditionally*? No. The Father would forgive, but He would do so based upon certain terms being met.

This is explained in the plain language of Peter’s sermons in Acts 2, 3 & 10. Speaking to the crucifiers of Christ, Peter said, *“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...”* and *“Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out...”* and *“everyone who believes on him receives remission of sins through His name...” (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 10:43).*

In other words, God did forgive sinners, but He forgave them conditionally. They had to believe, repent, and be baptized in order to receive forgiveness. Confession is also stipulated as a condition of forgiveness (Romans 10:9-10).

Humans are not more powerful than God when it comes to forgiving (or doing anything else). “Forgiving as Christ forgave” (Colossians 3:13) is forgiving conditionally. While we must always have a forgiving disposition (that is, a willingness to forgive, Matthew 6:14-15), we have no right to forgive unconditionally. Even God won’t do that.