

**LESSON 53**  
**Social Responsibilities in Christ**  
**Hebrews 13:1-6**

How much has the world and the philosophy of the world influenced you? How much do you conform to this world system? You may be saying to yourself, “I’m a Christian and I’m separated from the world. I don’t smoke, drink, dance, or chew, and I don’t go with the girls who do.” Granted, you may be separated in acts from the world, but are you separated in attitude? Has the philosophy of the world subtly invaded your thinking and you think yourself so “spiritual” that you do not recognize it?

Christians are not to be conformed to this world but are to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. ***“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect”*** (Rom. 12:2). Christians are to have a totally different philosophy while living in this world, for they are in the world but not of the world. They are not to be conformed to the world, but are to be transformed in the midst of it.

There is a very dangerous philosophy which has been widespread among Christians (praise God, it is beginning to fade), that Christians were intended to isolate themselves from the world, to draw lines of demarcation, huddling behind walls that would exclude them from the activities, the thoughts and the attitudes of the world. Christians are not to do the things the unsaved world does nor are they to have the worldlings philosophy of life, but Christians are to move among the unsaved world, showing by life and lips that Christ is Lord and Savior. Some misinformed Christians want to isolate themselves from the world so as to have a Protestant convent. There are people who want to raise their children from the womb to the tomb in a Christian atmosphere, protecting them from the onslaught of the world. They send their children to Christian elementary school, Christian high school, Christian college, want them to work for a Christian company after graduation, go only to Christian doctors, lawyers, businessmen, plumbers, and carpenters in life, retire in a Christian retirement center and be buried by a Christian mortician. This totally secluded kind of a life for a Christian is wrong, for we are told to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, not to isolate ourselves from the world.

The danger of being in the world but not of it is that we as Christians might conform to the world system in attitudes if not acts. We may go to the world for our social standards and not to the Bible and Christ. We do have social responsibilities in Christ, and we are not to conform (mold like putty) to the world, but have a distinctive Christian lifestyle in a Christ-hating world.

**SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE CHURCH - Hebrews 13:1-3**

***“Let love of the brethren continue.”*** -- Christians are to have a different concept of love from non-Christians. Because Christ indwells the Christian, he has love for his fellow-Christians that are ties stronger than family ties. Each Christian is to have a genuine concern for the spiritual

welfare of every other Christian. It is by this brotherly love that men shall know we are Christ's disciples.

***“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”*** (John 13:34-35).

Notice that love for Christians is to continue; therefore, we conclude that this love can be broken. It is not enough to just feel loving sentiment towards other Christians at the start of the Christian life, in the first glow of conversion, but it is to continue on, even when personalities clash and differences of viewpoint arise. To think evil or speak evil against a brother or sister in Christ is wrong, and if we do harbor ill feelings, we must repent of them and if need be go to the person to iron out the problem. Remember, continued love for the brethren is one of the evidences that a person is truly saved. ***“... any one who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother”*** (1 John 3:10).

The world loves, but it is a superficial kind of love and often is practiced only to use an individual and then the person is dropped when he or she is no longer useful.

I once heard about a fairly wealthy man who gave big parties and had lots of people around him who he thought were his friends. Then one day he grew older and became ill and most of these so-called friends dropped him and showed no interest in him as a person. They simply used this man to further their own ends.

***“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers ...”*** -- The Greek actually says, “Do not neglect to show love of strangers or love of guests.” In the New Testament times, there were many itinerant preachers and traveling Christians who needed a place to stay for a short while, perhaps a night or two, before continuing their journey, so Christians would put them up. They used their homes to show Christian love.

This does not mean that Christians are to open their homes to tramps and thieves, but to Christians in need. Christians are to open their homes to strangers. This is something that the world knows nothing about. The worldling is content only to entertain his friends, perhaps a very limited circle, but the Christian opens his home to other Christians in need and even to unsaved people who may need help. Remember, hospitality is not to be abused by those who are taken in. I agree with Benjamin Franklin that “house guest and fish begin to smell after three days.”

The Christian home is to be a center of hospitality and a center of evangelism. Christians must take the initiative to use their homes for God. They must be willing to make sacrifices to be hospitable, for strangers do not come around knocking at your door asking for an invitation to a meal. A home can be one of the most powerful forces for Christ in the whole world.

Have you had a new Christian couple into your home this year? Have you invited a non-Christian for dinner? If you have taken this admonition seriously, you shall be blessed of God.

**“... for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.”** -- This may refer to the fact that when entertaining strangers one might actually be entertaining an angel who appears as a man in the same way that Abraham entertained two angels and the preincarnate Christ without knowing it (Gen. 18). However, the word “angel” may be translated “messenger” and that seems to make more sense. When entertaining a stranger, this person may be a special messenger from God sent to teach you many wonderful lessons.

**“Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.”** -- This does not mean that Christians are obligated to go visit the jails and witness to every criminal. God calls some people to do this, but not all. This means that Christians are to remember other Christians who are being persecuted by slander, mockings, beatings, loss of jobs, destruction of homes, and imprisonment because of their stand for Christ.

Our care for suffering Christians shows our concern and love for them and for Christ.

**“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;’... And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me’”** (Matt. 25:34-35, 40).

**One Christian cannot suffer without the whole body suffering. “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; ...”** (1 Cor. 12:26). We must learn to sympathize with the brethren.

**“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep”** (Rom. 12:15).

**“Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ”** (Gal. 6:2).

How often we sing this song with our lips but do not practice it with our lives:

*“Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love;  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.  
We share our mutual woes,  
Our mutual burdens bear,  
And often for each other flows  
The sympathizing tear.”*

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE HOME - Hebrews 13:4

**“Let marriage be held in honor among all ...”** -- Christians, above all people, ought to recognize the divine institution of marriage. Marriage is an honorable estate and God puts His

stamp of approval upon it.

Many in the world today are rejecting marriage, saying that it is not practical for this modern age. Any teaching that leads men and women to think of the marriage union as a sign of bondage, and the sacrifice of independence, or to think of wifhood and motherhood as drudgery and an interference with woman's higher destiny is not in harmony with the Bible and the Christian view of love and marriage.

**“... and let the marriage bed be undefiled ...”** -- Sex within the marriage bond is good, right, healthy, and holy, for God has ordained sex for the marriage union and nowhere else. God is all for sex, but only within the bonds of wedlock.

The world today as well as yesterday has always been promiscuous about sex, but we Christians are not to conform to the world's standards. We are to have a Christ-like view of love, marriage, and sex, and this is one of our greatest witnesses to the world.

**“... for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”** -- Christians must understand that God has undertaken to sustain the sacredness of marriage and that He unceasingly and unrelentingly judges violations of it. This verse is clear: God judges people guilty of premarital and extramarital sex, and His judgment takes all kinds of forms. Even though sexual immorality may go unpunished by men, God will certainly execute judgment upon those who defile the marriage bed.

Today many leading sociologists and doctors are saying that one of the main causes for divorce is premarital sex, for it breeds distrust in marriage and more promiscuity.

The world has such loose sexual standards, but people will be judged for their immorality in eternity. They may be having what they call “fun” in this world, but they shall face eternal judgment in the next world.

Christians who fall into premarital and extramarital relationships must also expect severe discipline for their actions, for they are sinning against God.

Ray Stedman, pastor of Peninsula Bible Church in Palo Alto, California, makes an interesting comment of God's judging sexual immorality:

As this writer reminds us, God judges the immoral and adulterous. He does not mean that God looses lightning bolts from heaven against them, or that He causes terrible disease to come upon them; these are not the forms of judgment. But we can see the judgment of God in the terrible tempest of mental pressures and crackups which sweep like a plague across this land. They are due to the breakdown of moral standards. The certain deterioration of life is the judgment of God when sex standards are violated. It is the brutalization of humanity, so men become like animals and live on the level of animals. This is so apparent in our day.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN BUSINESS - Hebrews 13:5-6

***“Let your way of life be free from the love of money ...”*** -- The spirit of our age in America is materialism. The world lives to get more things, but we Christians must swim against the strong currents of a luxury-loving age. We must not give in to the pressures “to keep up with the Joneses.”

To have money in itself is not wrong, but the love of money is wrong. ***“For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang”*** (1 Tim. 6:10). God in His providence chooses to give some Christians money, and this verse does not mean that to be a Christian you have to take the vow of poverty. God expects those to whom He gives riches to use them for God’s glory.

***“Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ...”*** (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

John Wesley said, “Make all you can; save all you can; give all you can.”

***“... being content with what you have ...”*** -- There is nothing wrong with riches, but the point is that we must learn to be content with what God has given us. Contentment is not having what you want; it is wanting only what you have.

This contentment does not give one the right to be slothful in business or his job or to be apathetic towards his work which would be a bad Christian testimony. Contentment is being satisfied with whatever God has given us and not being thrown into a tail spin when He does not give us more.

***“Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me”*** (Phil. 4:11-13).

I remember reading a true story about a missionary who served Christ on a South Sea island. The island was very low and did not rise very much above the ocean. Sometimes the waves swept entirely over the island, and they had to build off the ground on stilts. People were all bunched together and there was very little privacy. There were three different kinds of food; one was a coconut and they had to prepare it in many different ways, for there was not any change of diet. They had furniture they made themselves, not very much different from what the natives had. Somebody asked this missionary, “How can you live that way?” He said, “We have everything we need.” Our problem in America is that we want a lot of things we really don’t need.

***“... for He Himself has said, ‘I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU ...’”*** -- This is a quote from Joshua 1:5 to show that Christ is our portion

forever and if we have the indwelling Christ we have all we really need. If we have Christ, what more could we want? Why should we not be content with Him? The promise of Christ in us is more stable than any bond, or note, or bank, or financial organization or government.

Sometimes it is difficult to know when to draw the line between proper increase in the standard of living and needless luxury which is really a waste, but the secret is in the words, "I will never fail you, nor forsake you." God is our great and unending source and He will never fail us. This in the Greek is the strongest of all negatives and could be translated, "I will never, never, under any circumstances, ever leave you or forsake you." God through Christ will meet all of our needs: spiritual, physical and financial.

***"...so that we confidently say, 'THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT SHALL MAN DO TO ME?'"*** -- This is a quote from Psalm 118:6. Whatever the circumstances may be the Lord is on the Christian's side. We may boldly and cheerfully say that He is our helper, and we need not be afraid of trials, adversities, persecutions, loss of property, destruction of homes or whatever. If we have God, what can man do to us? Absolutely nothing that would affect our relationship with Christ and the certainty that we shall be with Him in heaven!

## CONCLUSION

If you are without Christ, you must see that worldly goals, pursuits and pleasures will not bring you any peace with God. Momentary sexual thrills and the lust for money may bring temporary excitement but they leave a person empty and dissatisfied with life. Furthermore, the Bible teaches that men will be judged in eternity for their sexual and materialistic lifestyles on earth.

There is only One who can satisfy the longings of the human heart and fill the spiritual void in life. That One is Jesus Christ. He can forgive you for your sins, grant you eternal life, set your destiny towards heaven and fill the vacuum in your soul for real life. A person can only say he has found the answer when he has found Christ Jesus, the Lord. It was Christ who caused the Apostle Paul to say, ***"I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them rubbish in order that I may gain Christ ..."*** (Phil 3:8). Have you found Christ?