

# WICKEDNESS AND THE WICKED

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### I. INTRODUCTION

1. Society in general in our day has reached the point where fewer and fewer things are being classified as wickedness – wrong or sin maybe, but not wickedness! Also it is getting more difficult to find people society is willing to brand as wicked.
2. One of the purposes for this study of **Wickedness And The Wicked** is to remind us, and to offer proof, of the fact that there are many misconceptions about wickedness and wicked people.
  - a. Thus in this series on wickedness and the wicked we shall discuss not only the consequences of wickedness, but some of the traits and actions of the wicked, along with some specific wickednesses.
3. One of the main facts is the fact that one may be wicked and scripturally identified as among those classified as wicked even though that one is not a murderer, a liar, a drunkard, a thief or an adulterer.
4. Wickedness may be defined as that which is evil, bad, corrupt, worthless or lawless. It is the opposite of that which is right, good, valuable or lawful.
5. God through Amos said: “Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live...” Amos 5:15.
6. Jesus said: “No man can serve two masters...Ye cannot serve God and mammon,” Mt.6:24; He also said: “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad,” Mt.12:30.
7. Peter said: 1Pet.3:9-12.
8. There is no middle ground. No person can be neutral and please God.
  - a. There are only two classes of accountable beings. One class is righteous, and the other class is wicked.
  - b. Over and over John made this clear in 1Jno.
9. Though many people are not willing to face this fact; it is nevertheless true.
  - a. If you are not a servant of the Lord according to and in harmony with his written word, then you are classed with the wicked, Jno.12:48-50; Mt.12:30.
  - b. 1Jno.5:19: “the whole world lieth in wickedness;” Gal.1:4 speaks of “...this present evil world.” Cf. Jno.3:19,20.
10. Wicked people may be found among God’s children, Jer.5:26,27.

11. It is imperative that we recognize wickedness for what it is. And it doesn't start or stop with just a few immoral or violent practices against our fellow-men.
12. In this study, in order to emphasize our point on **wickedness and the wicked**, we shall only use, refer to and study passages that contain the term wickedness or wicked in developing our topic.

## II. DISCUSSION

### A. FIRST WE NOTE SOME TRAITS OF THE WICKED.

(Traits that apply to the wicked as a class, not that each one of these traits mentioned apply to each person classified as wicked.)

1. According to Psa.10:3-11 the wicked are full of **pride**. Cf. Job 21:14,15; Exo.5:3.
  - a. Pride is haughtiness and arrogance, a self-righteous attitude, which causes one to look down on others manifesting a swollen estimate of one's self, or one's own merits. Cf. Lk.18:9-14.
  - b. Pride comes from within and defiles its possessor.
  - c. Pride is when one is puffed up (1Cor.5:2; 13:4), when one's spirit is unduly lifted within him (Hab.2:4), when one is conceited and thinks more highly of oneself than one ought to think (Rom.12:3,16). See 1Cor.10:12 – a timely warning; Prov.17:19; 18:12.
  - d. A closer look at Psa.10:3-11, according to which the heart of the wicked:
    - (1) Is boastful, V.3a.
    - (2) Desires the wrong things; is greedy and blesses what the Lord abhors or produces profane speech, V.3b.
    - (3) Is filled with sinful pride, and will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts, V.4.
    - (4) And his ways are always grievous, V.5a.
    - (5) Does not foresee trouble or problems, V.5b,6
    - (6) Plots and schemes in wicked endeavors, Vv.7-10.
    - (7) Thinks that God hath forgotten, or never sees his wicked deeds, V.11.
  - e. To state it another way: The wicked are characterized:
    - (1) By scornful boasts, V.3.
    - (2) By stubborn, prideful bias, V.4.
    - (3) By spiritual blindness, V.5.

- (4) By swelling bigotry, V.6. (He will forget in his spiritual blindness and in his swelling bigotry that he is able to be cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone.)
  - (5) By spoken blasphemies, V.7.
  - (6) By secret brutalities, Vv.8-10, where he is described in a three-fold manner:
    - (a) As a bandit; that depicts his **cruelty**, V.8.
    - (b) As a lion; that depicts his **calculated confidence**, V.9a.
    - (c) As a hunter; that depicts his **skillful cunning**, Vv.9b,10.
  - (7) By his own self-deception, thinking that God has forgotten, or hides his face from, or never sees such wickedness because he sees no sign of the Lord as he goes from one triumph to another in his wickedness.
- f. Prov.16:18,19; 29:23.
- (1) The haughty spirit carries the head high. He looks above everyone, not to his own steps. Therefore, it is no wonder that he falls.
  - (2) Though the haughty spirit carries his head high, he looks up to no one, not even God!
  - (3) But God smites the object of which the haughty man is proud or in which he glories.
    - (a) David, moved by Satan, numbered – gloried in the number of his people, and Jehovah diminished them by pestilence, 2Sam.24:1-15.
    - (b) King Hezekiah boasted of his treasures, and the Lord marked it to be taken away, 2Kgs.18.
    - (c) At the moment Nebuchadnezzar was proud of his Babylon, he was banished from the enjoyment of it, Dan.4:28-37.
    - (d) “The vain daughters of Zion,” priding themselves on their ornaments, were covered with disgrace, Isa.3:16-24.
  - (4) After all, the state of heart that prepares man for the fall is the worst part of his condition. Pride was not made for man. Cf. Lk.18:9-14.
- g. Prov.6:16-19; 8:13.
- h. Only the humble will seek to know and to bow in submission to God’s will.

- i. Does the wickedness of pride hinder your sincere submission to God's complete requirement of you? Does it of me?
2. According to Prov.2:12, the evil or wicked person "speaketh froward things" or "perverted speech" (ESV). Cf. Vv.13-15.
    - a. Frowardness is perverseness or crookedness – a willful divination from that is strait or right.
    - b. The mouth of the wicked speaks forward things. A forward sows discord.
    - c. If one's heart is forward, then his actions will be perverse.
    - d. The evil or wicked man bears his character upon his lips; he speaks proud, forward, perverse things against God and his law; like a poisonous fountain sending up poisoned waters, V.12.
    - e. Having left the paths of uprightness, they become, therefore, foremost in iniquity in which they delight, V.13.
    - f. They rejoice, like Satan himself, to do evil; they delight in the forwardness of the wicked, V.14.
    - g. The "perverse" speech of evil men is pointed out. There is a certain speech that goes with or characterizes evil men – usually coarse words, vulgar words, irreverent words.
    - h. If you speak perverse, crooked things resulting in sowing discord among brethren, then you are classed as wicked. Cf. Prov.6:16-19.
    - i. What is the solution to this problem? Vv.10,11.
  3. According to Prov.17:4, the wicked give heed to **false lips**.
    - a. This verse is an example of Hebrew parallelism in which the second line restates the truth of the first statement. Thus:
      - (1) The "liar" is the "evil-doer".
      - (2) And "giveth ear" is the same as "giveth heed".
      - (3) And a "mischievous tongue" is the same as "wicked lips."
    - b. Paraphrase of V.4: "The wicked enjoy fellowship with others who are wicked; liars enjoy liars."
    - c. The wicked doer is not content with the stirring impulse of his own wickedness. His craving appetite for sin is such that he seeks the evil stimulants of others to give it increasing activity. Cf. 4:14-17.
      - (1) Thus it's been said that the drinker does not like to drink alone.

- (2) Ammon thus stimulated his own lust by giving heed to the false lips of his friend, 2Sam.13:5,6.
  - (3) Ahab, to secure his desired object, eagerly listened to the counsels of his murderous wife, 1Kgs.21:4-7.
  - (4) The Jews gave delighted ears to the false prophets, who flattered them in their wickedness, Isa.30:9-11; Jer.5:30,31; Mic.2:11; 1Jno.4:5.
  - (5) Active and intense was the malice of the ungodly, in suborning false witness for our Lord's condemnation, Mt.26:59,60.
  - (6) Yet, "there would not be so many open mouths, if there were not as many ears to entertain them." –Bp. Hall's Works, viii 7.
  - (7) But be it remembered that the listening ears share the responsibility of the naughty tongue; as all are involved in the treason, that are directly or indirectly acquainted with the plot.
- d. Gladly does the liar give ear to that which countenances his own wickedness. Cf. Prov.28:4a.
  - e. Since the wicked are not really concerned about pleasing God, but self, they listen to false lips and naughty tongues, 17:4.
  - f. They accept and walk in the counsel of the ungodly. Cf. Psa.1:1,2
  - g. The wicked refuse to receive instruction from the righteous.
  - h. False lips encourage and promote wickedness.
  - i. Those who are wicked are influenced and guided by false lips.
  - j. If you give heed to false lips, then you are classed with the wicked.
4. According to Prov.12:5 the wicked **give deceitful counsel**.
- a. In Prov.12:5 the thoughts and counsels of the righteous and the wicked are contrasted.
    - (1) The righteous person's thoughts reflect righteous (just) thinking.
    - (2) But the wicked person's thoughts, when expressed in advice, are "deceit", and not sincere.
  - b. The workings of good and evil are here traced to the source or fountain-head. Cf. Gen.6:5.
  - c. Widely different are the thoughts and counsels of the wicked from those of the righteous. Far from right, his thoughts ripen into counsels fraught with deceit.

- (1) Such were the counsels of Joseph's brethren to deceive their father, Gen.37:18-20.
  - (2) Of Jeroboam, under a feigned consideration of the people, 1Kgs.12:26-30.
  - (3) Of Daniel's enemies, under pretence of honoring the king, Dan.6:4-17.
  - (4) Of Sanballat, under the guise of friendship, Neh.6:1,2.
  - (5) Of Haman, under the cover of patriotism, Esth.3:8-11.
  - (6) Of Herod, under the profession of worshipping the infant Jesus, Mt.2:7,8.
  - (7) Of Judas, under the pretense of friendship betrayed Jesus with a kiss, Mt.26:48,49.
- d. The wicked counsel others to practice wickedness. Their mouths encourage evil.
- e. According to Prov.10:32, "The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh forwardness (marg. "frowardnesses")."
- (1) That is, the wicked will not hearken to the righteous who "know what is acceptable."
  - (2) Not only will the wicked not hearken to the righteous who know what is acceptable, neither will they remain silent, but they give deceitful, perverse, crooked counsel.
- f. Do you give out or listen to the deceitful counsel of the wicked. If so, then you are classed with the wicked!
- g. According to Prov.15:28, "the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things."
- (1) The righteous man thinks before he speaks. His tongue does not run before his wit; he does not speak rashly, or unadvisedly; because he studies – ponders – his thoughts and his words. Cf. Jas.1:19.
  - (2) On the other hand, the wicked person pours out his evil words without a thought; that is, they speak evil things with ease.
  - (3) Oh, the wrong things that get said this way! And what hurt and harm that result!
  - (4) How important the discipline of the tongue here suggested. We should think twice, before we speak once. Cf. Jas.3.
  - (5) The wicked has no such restraint. He cares not what he says. It is of little consequence to him, whether it's well-timed, or maybe even it it's true, or whom it wounds.

- (6) Yet fearful it is! Think about how every light word brings its account (Mt.12:36), and will be found a “hot coal to make the fire of hell burn more fiercely.”
- h. According to Psa.36:1-4 the wicked have “no fear of God before his eyes. For he flattereth himself in his own eyes...The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good. He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.”
5. The wicked **forsake the law**, both of God and man, Psa.119:53; Cf. Rom.13:1-7; 1Pet.2:13,14; 4:15; 1Jno.3:4; 5:19; Gal.6:5,11,12.
- a. It is not that they never knew God, his word and or his law. It’s that they forsake it in spite of having known. Cf. Rom.1:18-32.
- b. Look around you to see the truth of this in our day, even in our city, among those who have once known, believed and obeyed the gospel, but have forsaken the Lord.
- c. The wicked have been forsaking the law since the days of Adam and even in the Garden of Eden.
- d. The wicked world lies in wickedness and our prisons are overflowing with convicted law-breakers, and even with a back-log waiting to be placed therein.
- e. Men may say, “I thank God I am not like those hardened criminals on death row, or those serving life sentences without parole.” But you don’t have to have violated every principle contained in God’s law in order to be a law violator and to be classified with the wicked. Cf. Jas.2:10; Rev.21:8.
6. According to Isa.57:20,21, the wicked are like the **troubled sea**.
- a. They are “like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked.”
- b. The wicked are troubled and restless people; they have no peace. Cf. Phil.4:4-9.
- c. As the troubled, raging waters of the sea (such as the Tsunami) cast up mire and dirt and destruction), the wicked are constantly doing wrong, encouraging others to do evil and stirring up strife.
7. According to Prov.10:16 the fruit of the wicked is **sin**.
- a. As Jesus said in Mt.7:17-20: “by their fruit ye shall know them.”
- b. In Prov.10:16 we have a contrast between the good fruit of the righteous and the evil fruit of the wicked.

- c. The one tends to life and the other to sin. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; the wicked, that of corruption and death
- d. In either case, each is known by his fruits!
- e. Paraphrase of Prov.10:16: “The good man’s earnings advance the cause of righteousness. The evil man squanders his on sin.”
- f. The labors of the righteous is good for him and others. The increase of the wicked is not good for either him or others; for it leads to sin. Cf. Eccl.5:12.
- g. With the wicked, self is both the object and the end. His fruit therefore is sin. Cf. Prov.21:4.
- h. His Master, so long as he serves him, cares little how, to what extent, how much or how little, or in what sphere.

These are some of the **traits** of the wicked. A study of some of the **actions** of the wicked will follow in the next part of lesson of **Wickedness And The Wicked**, which will then be followed by a consideration of some **specific wickednesses** to conclude this three part study of **Wickedness And The Wicked**.

## **B. SOME ACTIONS OF THE WICKED.**

[Wickedness is the result of evil thoughts, attitudes and unrighteous actions. (Since “it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,” Jer.10:23), a man left to himself, without God, will act wickedly, Gen.6:5; Rom.1:18-22,28). Such actions of the wicked we now begin to consider.]

1. According to Psa.10:3 the wicked **will boast of and bless the wicked**.
  - a. He glories in a mere desire; he gives praise to his heart’s desire; to his soul’s lust; he blesses and idolizes himself; he sings hallelujahs to himself and forgets God.
  - b. He is a brazen-faced boaster; for he boasts of that which is his shame; for he blesses the covetous whom the Lord abhors.
  - c. He glories in his own shame and corruption, and has pleasure in those who do such things. Cf. Rom.1:32.
  - d. Here pride meets covetousness and blesses it.
  - e. Instead of praising God, he praises his own greed and its success.
  - f. Boasters are listed among the wicked mentioned in 2Tim.3:1-7 who will cause “perilous times” to come in the last days.
  - g. Wicked workers of iniquity boast themselves, Psa.94:4; Cf. Lk.18:9ff.
  - h. Charity or love does not brag or boast, 1Cor.13:4.

- i. Prov.25:14 gives us the true picture of the boaster:
    - (1) He is rich in promises, but performing nothing; exciting large expectations, then sinking them in disappointment.
    - (2) He is a bragging man, making great show with words, but does not fulfill his promises; such promises remind one of clouds and wind in dry weather, but no rain falls. Cf. Jude 12.
    - (3) ESV: “Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of a gift he does not give.”
    - (4) Those who promise and do not perform are wantonly cruel
      - (a) To deliberately and falsely raise expectations without fulfilling them is one of the greatest wickednesses of which men can be guilty.
      - (b) The mirage in the desert raises false hope to the desperately thirsty traveler and even increases his thirst only to dash his hopes of satisfaction.
      - (c) The wicked who “boasteth himself in a gift of falsehood” are as deceitful and as disappointing as the mirage of the desert to the thirsty traveler.
    - (5) As a rule he who promises the most will perform the least. The greatest givers do not as a rule blow their own horns or sing their own praises.
  - j. See Rom.1:30,32; 1Cor.13:6.
2. According to Psa.37:32 the wicked watcheth the righteous and seeketh to slay him.
- a. The wicked are envious of the righteous as being a reproach to them.
  - b. The wicked do this because the righteous thwart their plans, oppose their proceedings, often frustrate their counsels.
  - c. Because sometimes their opposition brings the wicked man to peril, as when it takes the shape of prosecution before a court, or of help given to the victims of the wicked.
  - d. Thus the wicked often seek revenge that lead them to murderous thoughts – ever “watching” for opportunities to slay the righteous.
  - e. Take note of the recent examples of the wicked seeking to and even succeeding in killing judges, policemen, etc. to satisfy their desire for revenge!
  - f. Cf. Saul Vs David; Cain Vs Abel (1Jno.3:12)

- g. Jesus said they would hate his followers because they hated him, Mt.5:11,12; 10:22; Lk.6:22; Jno.15:18,19; 16:1-3; 17:14; 1Jno.3;13; 2Tim.3:12.
3. According to Psa.37:12 the wicked plots against the just.
- a. And it is not necessarily always physical harm they seek to do the righteous – they may:
    - (1) Plot against the righteous seeking to destroy the reputation of the righteous; attempt to destroy his influence for good. (“If you can’t answer the man’s arguments, then smear him, discredit him!” is the practice of the wicked.)
    - (2) Do it in the most secret manner.
    - (3) May act hypocritically in so doing – feigning faith, friendship and love by “feigned words” while he is so acting.
  - b. That the wicked commonly lay plots against the just is a matter of history, and of every day experience because:
    - (1) They envy the moral character of the good, with the respect it wins and the influence it wields.
    - (2) They are also rebuked by the quiet dignity of genuine, sterling character of the faithful followers of Christ, hence through sheer hatred, seek to persecute and remove it out of their sight.
  - c. The plotting of the wicked against the just according to Psa.37:12-15:
    - (1) Are wrathful, V.12b.
    - (2) Cruel, V.14a.
    - (3) Are determined, V.14b.
    - (4) Are cowardly, V.14c (attack the poor, the needy; those who are unable to defend themselves with any degree of success.
    - (5) Are self-destructive; they recoil upon themselves, V.15.
4. According to Psa.37:21 the wicked borrows and does not pay back.
- a. The wicked does not hesitate to borrow, but is not careful about repaying what he borrows; he is dishonest in the matter of his debts.
  - b. When you owe a debt you are then unwilling or unable to pay, you have a serious problem. But being dishonest about it is not the way to solve the problem.

- c. One who borrows with a light heart or little consideration of the responsibility is classified as wicked.
- d. However, the righteous will provide things honest in the sight of all men as well as the Lord (Rom.12:17; 2Cor.8:2) and therefore will never be unwilling to pay his debts. See Rom.12:8.
- e. The wicked, but never the righteous, may deceitfully and sinfully use the bankruptcy laws to avoid paying his debts.
  - (1) When and if one does this, there is first a moral bankruptcy before the financial and physically bankruptcy!
  - (2) I know of no scripture or scriptural principal that authorizes a person to take “bankruptcy” in an effort to legally avoid paying his debts.
  - (3) To use the bankruptcy laws to protect oneself while seeking to make provision to pay one’s debts, yes! but to avoid paying one’s debts, NO! A thousand times NO!

Concluding thoughts:

- 1. The actions of the wicked indicate their wickedness. By their fruits you shall know them! Cf. Mt.7:15-20.
- 2. Thus we have considered some actions by which one is identified as wicked.
  - a. Boasting of and blessing the wicked.
  - b. Being envious and resentful of the righteous.
  - c. Seeking opportunities to slay the righteous.
  - d. Plotting against the just.
  - e. Borrowing but not paying one’s debts, even seeking ways to avoid paying them.
- 3. But there is no way to escape the righteous wrath of God against the unrepentant wicked actions of the wicked at the final judgment, Rom.1:18-20; 2:2,6-11,16; Ac.17:31; Rom.14:12; 2Cor.5:10; Eccl.12:13,14.
- 4. Without a doubt the wicked shall give an account for their wicked actions, and shall be eternally lost if found wanting at the final judgment!

## C. SOME SPECIFIC WICKEDNESSES

\* As long as we simply discuss and condemn wickedness in a general way, few will become too disturbed from a personal standpoint, and, perhaps, will approve of such discussion and condemnation of wickedness.

\* Some professed Christians have been known to contend that we should preach principles, but never make specific application of the principles in our preaching.

\* Many people frown on those who specifically identify sin and wickedness by name. Others are openly critical of those who do so. Still others are critical of those who do so, but are not so open about it – they murmur about it to others who will listen to them.

\* Some sincere people may not be aware of the fact that certain attitudes and deeds are wicked. We have to be plain; we have to identify wickedness in a plain manner – be specific in identifying things that are wicked. As the saying goes: “Call a spade a spade!” Call it by its name!

\* The world has “glamorized” and even promoted specific wickednesses, and has tried to remove the shame and sinfulness from such things.

\* Those who are truly, sincerely seeking to faithfully serve God appreciate and encourage those who specifically point out wickedness and expose it by name for what it is.

\* In this part of our study of **Wickedness And The Wicked**, it is our purpose to take note of some things that are **specifically** mentioned in the Bible, the inspired text, as being wicked.

1. **Idolatry** is specifically classified as wickedness.

a. In Deut.13:1-11 idolatry, the serving of other gods, is spoken of as wickedness in V.11.

(1) In this text, whether it be a false prophet (Vv.1-5) or a close relative (V.6) who would entice Israel to go and serve other gods, the gods of the people around them, they were to put away **evil** from their midst by stoning that one to death (Vv.8-10).

- (2) V.11 says: “And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such **wickedness** as this is among you.”
  - (3) The wickedness of idolatry along with its attendant evils are listed in Rom.1:22-25.
- b. In the N.T., **covetousness** is called idolatry (Col.3:5), and a covetous man is called an idolater (Eph.5:5).
- (1) Since covetousness is idolatry, and idolatry is wickedness, that means that covetousness is wickedness.
  - (2) Also since a covetous man is an idolater, and idolatry is wickedness, that means the covetous man is wicked!
  - (3) Covetousness, which is idolatry:
    - (a) By definition means: inordinate desire; lust often in a bad, evil, sense.
    - (b) In its essence: It is putting the creature, or the thing created in the place of the Creator, and giving it the worship or devotion due to God alone.
    - (c) In its practice: Body and soul are consecrated to the service of mammon.
    - (d) In its punishment: Idolatry is a sin peculiarly obnoxious to God – is not merely the breach of his law, but treason against his government. God deprives the covetous of his idol at last, and sends him treasureless into the unseen world, wretched and ruined, to endure the wrath to come. See Mt.6:19-21,24; Lk.16:13; 1Tim.6:6-11,17-19; Heb.13:5,6.
- c. The wickedness of idolatry is listed in Gal.5:19-21 as a work of the flesh which will keep one from inheriting the kingdom of God. Cf. 1Cor.6:9-10; Col.3:5,6.
- d. In 1Sam.15:23 when king Saul stubbornly followed his own way instead of obeying God, he was told that “...rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft (or divination), and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”
- (1) Witchcraft was subject to the death penalty, Exo.22:18.
  - (2) Therefore to stubbornly reject and disobey God is, as far as sin is concerned, to be as wicked as an idolater!
- e. The danger of the wickedness of idolatry is evidently still with us today because:
- (1) We are warned o keep ourselves from idols in 1Jno.5:20.

- (2) We are told of the danger we still face of being cast into “the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” because of idolatry in Rev.21:8.
    - (3) We are not to keep company with a brother in Christ if he be covetous, or an idolater, 1Cor.5:11.
    - (4) We are told to “flee from idolatry” in 1Cor.10:14.
  - f. Covetousness, which is idolatry, in spite of the many references to it and warnings against it, even as a work of the flesh which will keep one from inheriting the kingdom of heaven, is a sin:
    - (1) No one will admit or confess.
    - (2) For which no one has ever been disciplined to my knowledge.
- 2. Fornication is classified as wickedness.
  - a. This sin is specifically referred to by Paul in 1Cor.5:13 as being wickedness: “Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” Cf. Vv.1-6.
  - b. Fornication is illicit, unlawful sexual intercourse, or any and all sexual relations outside scriptural marriage where God has joined together a male and a female in a holy relationship.
    - (1) In the N.T. fornication is a word sometimes used to refer to or include adultery; sometimes, it is distinguished from adultery.
    - (2) But sex between the unmarried or those un-scripturally married, or with one other than one’s own spouse is always condemned either as fornication or adultery.
    - (3) Consider 1Cor.6:18; Heb.13:4.
  - c. In Gen.39:9, referring to fornication and or adultery, Joseph said: “...How than can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”
  - d. Fornication, which is classified as wickedness, is one of the works of the flesh listed in Gal.5:19-21 which will keep one from inheriting the kingdom of God.
  - e. In 1Cor.6:18 the practice of fornication is seemingly singled out as is no other sin.
    - (1) Some sins are overcome by resistance or fighting, but not the sin of fornication.
    - (2) It is overcome by fleeing from its presence as did Joseph in the case of Potiphar’s wife’s sinful advances, Gen.39:6ff.

- (3) In seeking to understand the seriousness of the warning in V.18 compare V.13,15-17. Also see Rom.1:24,26,27.
    - (4) No other sin so thoroughly assaults the idea that the “body is for the Lord” as does the sin of fornication.
  - f. It’s no wonder, then, that fornication is classified as wickedness!
3. Homosexuality, or same-sex sexual relations, is classified as wickedness.
- a. From studying Gen.19:4-7, Judg.19:22-24 and Jude 7, we learn that homosexuality was classified as wickedness under the O.T. and before the law of Moses was given. Also from Lev.18:22 under the law of Moses.
  - b. Rom.1:26-32 lists and describes homosexual sins as one of the things which cause those who are guilty to be “worthy of death.”
  - c. Homosexuality is not an acceptable “alternate life-style” as is claimed in our time.
    - (1) It is an unacceptable, sinful life-style which God condemns, Rom.1:24,28,32.
    - (2) It is vile affections contrary to nature, Rom.1:26,27.
    - (3) It is “fornication and going after strange flesh”, Jude 7. Cf. Lev.10:1,2 and the case of Nadab and Abihu offering “strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not.”
    - (4) It is “contrary to sound doctrine,” 1Tim.1:10.
    - (5) It is a sinful practice which is to be, and can be, ceased, repented of, washed, sanctified, and justified or pardoned in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,” 1Cor.6:9-11.
4. Hypocrisy is classified as wickedness, Mt.22:15-22.
- a. Note what the Pharisees attempted to do and how they attempted to do it, Vv.15-17.
  - b. Also note how Jesus classified their actions in V.18 and what he called them.
  - c. See Mt.23:5,13-15,23,25,27,28.
  - d. The hypocrite may draw nigh to the Lord with his mouth, and honor him with his lips; but his heart is always far from the Lord, Mt.15:7,8.
  - e. Deceitful pretence whenever, wherever, and however, or in whomever it is found is hypocrisy, which is wickedness.

- (1) It has wrong motives,
  - (2) It comes forth from a wicked heart,
  - (3) It may do the right thing for the wrong reasons.
  - (4) The hypocrite may give alms to the poor, pray and fast, but do it for the wrong reasons. Cf. 1Cor.13:1-3
  - (5) They may be and usually are, if not always, seeking self-glory and praise, doing their works to be seen of men, Mt.6:1ff.
  - (6) They may love, draw nigh to God with their mouth, and may compass sea and land to make one proselyte. However, their heart is far from God and in truth they “are full of hypocrisy and iniquity,” Mt.15:7,8.
  - (7) They with their mouth destroy their neighbor, and judge another hypocritically, Prov.11:9; Mt.7:1-5; Lk.19:9-14.
- f. The hypocrite’s hope shall perish, Job 8:13; Cf. 20:5.
- g. The hypocrite has a horrible fact awaiting him at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ, Mt.24:48-51; Job27:8.

5. Wrong thoughts are classified as wickedness.

- a. Example: Simon the sorcerer, wanting and seeking power that did pertain to or belong to him is classified as wickedness, Ac.8:18-24.
- (1) V.20: “he thought that”
  - (2) V.21: “Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter”
  - (3) V.22: “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness”
  - (4) His covetous thought for unauthorized power caused him to engage in the wicked action of offering money to purchase it. (Vv.18,19)
  - (5) His evil desire caused him to be “in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity (unrighteousness).” (V.23).
  - (6) His actions proved his heart was “not right in the sight of God,” (V.21) and caused him to be in danger of perishing (V.20).
  - (7) This proves beyond doubt that wrong thoughts are classified as wickedness; that one may be guilty of wickedness because he thinks the wrong thing. Cf. Mt.5:28; 12:34,35; 15:19.
  - (8) Don’t let anyone deceive you into thinking that your thoughts will not make you wicked, or that as long as you think it but don’t act upon the thought you have not sinned

- (9) Prov.4:23 warns: “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”
  - b. Other examples of wrong thoughts wanting and seeking what does not pertain to one or belong to one.
    - (1) Wanting and seeking or even claiming the miraculous power the apostles possessed to lay hands on others to heal them and/or to impart to them spiritual gifts.
    - (2) Wanting, seeking and or claiming the possession of miraculous spiritual gifts in this age.
    - (3) Wanting, seeking and or claiming miracles through human agency in this age.
    - (4) Wanting to and seeking ways to divorce and marry another without having put away a previous spouse for the cause of fornication.
    - (5) Wanting and seeking to serve as an elder in a local church without meeting the qualifications.
    - (6) Wanting and seeking to worship and serve the Lord on the basis of the doctrines and commandments of men rather than “in spirit and in truth” and/or rather than in harmony with the doctrine of Christ, as thus saith the Lord, book, chapter, and verse.
    - (7) Thinking that after having obeyed the gospel, I can go to heaven without really seeking or putting “first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,” Mt.6:33.
    - (8) Thinking that faithfully assembling with the saints and being fully engaged as a fully active participator in the work of the local church is not all that important or necessary!
6. A failure or a refusal to forgive even though one has been forgiven is classified as wickedness.
- a. Mt.18:23-35, emph.V.32.
    - (1) The subject of correcting an offending brother in Mt.18:15-18 leads us up to our text.
    - (2) Perhaps Vv.15-18, dealing with the correction of an offending brother caused Peter to raise the question of V.21 which resulted in Jesus’ answer in V.22.
      - (a) Among the Jewish Rabbis some were said to have taught men to forgive their neighbor three times, but no more.

- (1) Even this advice, however, they are also said to have qualified so greatly as to amount, practically, to hardly recommending any forgiveness at all.
- (b) The Jews of Jesus day were fond of defining and limiting moral obligations, as if they could be accurately prescribed by number.
- (c) This being the case, Peter, in the question he asked (V.21), may have thought himself to be even conspicuously nearer the truth and the true spirit of Christ.
  - (1) However, Jesus' reply showed him plainly that he also was yet very far off the mark.
  - (2) Taught him there was hardly any limit to the question he had asked about how often to forgive a brother.
  - (3) Thus Jesus demolishes this Jewish attempt to define by law the measure of grace.
  - (4) 70X7, meaning no specific number, but practically unlimited. It must be rendered whenever a brother repents and seeks forgiveness. Cf. Lk.17:3-5.
  - (5) Of course, there must be "fruits meet for repentance" or proof of repentance, Mt.3:7,8.
- (3) The absolute necessity of forgiveness and the wickedness of failing or refusing to do so is dramatically illustrated by the unmerciful, unforgiving servant in our text in Vv.23-34, along with its application and lesson to be learned from the parable in V.35.
  - (a) Note the compassion shows to this servant and the debt forgiven him by his lord, the king, Vv.23-27.
  - (b) Then take note of the attitude and actions of this same servant toward one of his fellow-servants that caused him to be classified as a wicked servant, Vv.28-34.
  - (c) Finally, Jesus' application of the parable, V.35.
- (4) We should not be reluctant, but glad to forgive. And it must it must be "from the heart."
- (5) Readiness to forgive is the true mark of belonging to Christ, Eph.4:31,32; Col.3:12,13; 2Cor.2:6-11.

- (6) The duty of forgiveness is urged:
    - (a) By a consideration of the greatness of God's mercy to us.
      - (1) How can we behold the great mercy of God to us and yet be unforgiving to others?
    - (b) By a consideration of the littleness of our brother's sin against us compared to our sins against God.
    - (c) By a consideration of the wickedness of the sin of unforgiveness, V.32.
    - (d) By a consideration of the terrible consequence of indulging an unforgiving spirit, V.35. Cf. Mt.6:12,14,15.
  - (7) I always want to be and think I should be forgiven and can't understand why you would even hesitate to forgive me no matter how serious my trespass against you; but I can also see there are a number of reasons why it's no so easy for me to forgive you!
7. A failure to use what we have been given or acquired through God's grace is classified as wickedness.
- a. Mt.25:14-30, emph.V.26.
    - (1) The one talent man was not wicked because he didn't have more ability.
    - (2) He was not wicked because he lacked the ability to use what he had been given. See V.15.
    - (3) He was classified as wicked because he failed to properly use that with which he had been entrusted.
  - b. A closer look at the wicked, slothful, unprofitable servant, and why he is so classified.
    - (1) He received only one talent; but he, like the other two servants, received according to his ability to bear and or to use in harmony with his intellect, will, opportunities, and position.
    - (2) He did not make the proper use of that which he was given. Instead, thereof, he simply treated it as if it were wholly his own and not "his lord's money;" thus he could do with it what he wanted.
      - (a) So he "dugged in the earth, and hid his lord's money," V.18.
    - (3) His excuse for his actions reveals his wickedness, which was that he "knew" the Lord to be a "hard master," harsh,

and unjust, asking more of his servant than he ought, and one to be feared, Vv.24,25.

(4) He also sought to justify himself on the basis of not having lost his one talent, while sinfully refusing to recognize his God-given duty of using it to gain another, Vv.26,27.

(5) As a result he was classified as an “unprofitable” (V.30), “wicked and slothful servant” (V.26), as opposed to “good and faithful” (Vv.21,23); plus he lost not only what he had been given but more (Vv.28-30).

c. See 1Tim.6:17-19 noting what it teaches about using what we have given by God’s grace.

### Lessons:

1. We are all God’s servants; all alike have a work to do for him; all must do it.
2. All that we have is His; all must be used in His service.
3. None of us is without some ability, whether we are 5 talent, 2 talent or one talent persons; with whatever we have to be used to the Lord’s profit and our benefit.
4. Wickedness does not consist solely in gross, immoral sins only. Neglect, and negative evil is as much a sin as is positive evil action.
5. This servant was unprofitable, wicked and slothful and condemned, not for being a robber, an adulterer, an idolater, or a homosexual, etc, but for doing nothing – i.e., for not using what he was given by the Lord.
6. How serious a thing it is for those who name the name of the Savior **NOT** to be “abounding” in his work; what blindness of judgment; what perversion of will; what blasphemous thoughts; what an awful end awaits the “unprofitable servant” of the Lord!
7. How great a privilege it is for us to be permitted to do anything for the Lord; to be trusted by Him at all, being such as we are; to have the opportunity, in any manner, of “adorning” His “doctrine”; to be enabled to do so to any degree; and to have the prospect of hearing our work of faith fully acknowledged at last.
  - a. Thus our question should be: “Lord, what would thou have me to do?” And, “Here am I send me.”

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8. Presuming to speak or act for God is wickedness.
  - a. Presuming to speak for God means to take upon oneself to speak or act without permission or authority from God to do so.
  - b. Note: Webster defines “wicked” as “evil in principle or practice; sinful; immoral”, which harmonizes with its biblical use.
    - (1) Therefore, “wickedness” which is its noun form may, in view of its biblical use, be defined as that which is evil, bad, or lawless; anything done without divine, lawful authorization, is wickedness.
    - (2) In other words, if one speaks or acts without authority from God, he is speaking and acting wickedly.
    - (3) In view of this, we continue our study of **Wickedness And The Wicked**, with one last reference to a specific wickedness which will involve or include in its scope many different doctrines of men and unauthorized practices of men who presume to speak and or act for God.
  - c. An O.T. example of such wickedness, Deut.18:18-22; Cf. Jer.14:13-15. See also Deut.4:2.
  - d. N.T. confirmation of condemning the principle of presuming to speak for God.
    - (1) The apostles of Christ were given the authority “to bind and to loose on earth what has been bound or loosed in heaven,” not men in general, Mt.16:19; 18:18.
    - (2) God speaks to us today through his Son, Jesus Christ, who speaks to through his chosen apostles, who speak to us through the written word, Mt.3:16,17; 17:5; 28:18-20; Heb.1:1,2; Jno.17:7,8,18-21; Mt.10:40; Lk.10:16; Jno.13:20; 2Cor.5:17-20; Eph.3:1-5; 2Tim.3:16-4:5.
    - (3) 1Cor.4:6; Col.3:17; 1Pet.4:11; 2Jno.9; Rev.22:18,19.
    - (4) If Jesus Christ has not authorized us to speak or act or practice it, we have no more divine right, or scriptural right, to claim we are speaking or acting for him or by his authority than did the prophets of Deut.18:20 or Jer.14:13-15.
  - e. The following is a list of things that men of our day presume are pleasing to the Lord, but are things which the Lord has **NOT** authorized them to teach.
    - (1) Babies are born in sin.
    - (2) Jesus did not die for all men, but only for the elect.
    - (3) Unconditional predestination.

- (4) Salvation of sinners is wholly or solely by grace.
- (5) Salvation of sinners is by faith alone or at the point of faith before and without further obedience.
- (6) The Scriptures, the inspired written word of God, are not sufficient to guide us. We must have:
  - (a) A direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon our heart.
  - (b) Latter day revelation.
  - (c) The creeds, manuals, disciplines of men.
  - (d) The “ex cathedra” of the Pope of Rome.
- (7) One church is as good as another.
- (8) Baptism is not essential to salvation from past sins.
- (9) Jesus died on the cross and shed his blood for our physical sicknesses as well as for our sins.
- (10) The church is not important, one can go to heaven without being a member of it.
- (11) Sprinkling is baptism.
- (12) There is nothing in a name.
- (13) Alien sinners may pray through to salvation – pray the “sinner’s prayer”.
- (14) One once saved cannot so sin as to be eternally lost, or once saved, always saved.
- (15) There are Christians, saved people, in all churches.
- (16) It does not matter how a person worships God as long as they are sincere.
- (17) We are not under any system of law today, only under grace.
- (18) The blood of Christ will cleanse a child of God of the sins he commits either through weakness or ignorance as he commits them without specific repentance or confession or prayer.
- (19) Local churches have a Scriptural right to provide entertainment, recreation, and social activities for the young people.
- (20) Scriptural fellowship includes church suppers, food, fun and frolic.
- (21) Churches may Scripturally contribute funds out of their treasury to help build and support Human Organizations, such as: Schools, Benevolent Organizations, etc.

- (2) Local churches may scripturally participate in Congregational Cooperation of the Sponsoring Church variety.

### III. CONCLUSION

1. Note this:
  - a. When one presumes to speak or teach any of these things in the name of Christ, he is speaking presumptuously and is making a false claim because not one of them is taught in God's written word.
  - b. The person who so speaks is guilty of wickedness.
  - c. We must do as Jas.2:12 and 1Pet.4:11 require. Cf. 1Cor.4:6; Rev.22:18,19.
  - d. These studies should impress upon us that not only are immoral people wicked, but that many who may be good morally and even devoutly religious are in fact practicing wickedness.
2. Note also what will happen to the impenitent wicked (Remember who they are, or who is classified as wicked and why).
  - a. His lamp shall be put out, Prov.13:9. Cf. Job18:5; 21:17.
  - b. The wicked is snared in the work of his own hand, Psalms.9:16; Prov.5:22.
  - c. He shall fall by his own wickedness, Prov.11:5.
  - d. The Lord is far from the wicked and is angry with the wicked every day, Prov.15:29; Psalms.7:11.
  - e. The years of the wicked shall be shortened, Prov.10:27.
  - f. The wicked will receive wrath and punishment, Prov.11:21-23; Cf. Rom.1:18; 2:8,9; Isa.57:21.
3. Are you wicked? Are you or am I classified as wicked? We are:
  - a. If we practice any form of idolatry, or fornication, including adultery and homosexuality.
  - b. If we practice hypocrisy, or if we allow wrong thoughts to occupy our hearts.
  - c. If we fail or refuse to forgive others their trespasses if they repent.
  - d. If we fail to properly use what we have received by God's grace.
  - e. If we presume to speak or act for God beyond what is written in the Scriptures.
4. A self-examination in the light of God's word is certainly in order; is a must. Cf. 2Cor.13:5; Heb.11:6; Jas.2:10; 1Jno.1:7,9.