

## OUR CONDUCT

by Tricia Berg

*As **obedient children**, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your **conduct**, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, **conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile**, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 1 Peter 1:14-19*

The children of God have a HIGHER standard of living than the world, because they are called OUT of it to be Sons of God. Being disliked for wanting to please God instead of the world is to be expected. (John 15:18-21, 1John 3:12-13, 2Tim. 3:12-17, 1Pet. 4, 1John 2:15-17, Col. 3, Heb. 13:14)

***For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received **the Spirit of adoption as sons**, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. Romans 8:13-19*

The fact that no one keeps God's words perfectly is NOT an excuse to throw in the towel and go along with the world, NOR does it mean that since no one is perfect that no one can ever speak against evil without being a hypocrite. We are to hold ourselves and one another accountable. God knew we were not perfect when He gave us those instructions. (Titus 2, Titus 3:8) There is a difference between judging others for sins we do ourselves and never judging—sin must be dealt with for the good of a person's soul. (1Cor. 5:3-5, 1Tim. 1:5, Matt. 8:15-17, Matt. 7:5, Rom. 2:1-11)

There is a difference between speaking the truth IN LOVE and spewing hate—truth should not be hateful, but lies are NOT loving. (Eph. 4:15-32, 1Cor. 13:1-3, 2Tim. 4:1-4) Our motive is to give people a chance to examine themselves and change their behavior so as to be found pleasing to God (2Cor.

13:5, 1John 2:28-29)—not to condemn anyone, but the opposite! Not to suggest anyone is perfect, but to encourage everyone to do a “status check” of their priorities and their walk with Jesus. (Rev. 2-3)

The Bible tells us how we should seek (strive - Heb. 12:14) to live, by the power of the Holy Spirit within us. It’s up to us whether we love God enough to want to please Him or not. The following list was previously included in my article “[All Fall Short](#),” but I have made quite a few edits. I have also added brief contrasts of what our old nature might want to do, as compared with what the children of God (born-again believers, indwelt by the Holy Spirit - John 1:12-13, 1John 3:24) should do.

DO:

(a/k/a the "royal law" and "law of liberty," - these are the "works" James speaks of that give evidence to the existence of SAVING faith as opposed to empty words of belief which are denied by failing to follow up on them. Jam. 1:22-27, Jam. 2:8, 2:14-26, Rom. 13:8-10, Titus 1:16)

- love God first, most, best, highest (Matt. 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-30, Luke 10:25-28, Matt. 10:37-39, Mark 12:28-34, Eph. 6:24) **instead of** putting ourselves first, pursuing wealth, things, the esteem of others and pleasure, idolizing celebrities, siding with loved ones against God, disobeying His instructions, disregarding what pleases Him. (2Cor. 5:9-10, 2Cor. 5:14-15, 2Tim. 2:4, 1Pet. 4:1-7)
- love our neighbor as ourselves and our brothers in the Lord (Matt. 22:34-40, Luke 10:29-37, Rom. 13:8-10, 1John 2:7-11, 1John 3:16-18, 1John 4:7-21, 1Pet. 4:7-9, Col. 3:12-14, Rom. 12:10, 1Cor. 13:4-7, 13, 2Cor. 13:11-12, Gal. 5:13-25, 1Thess. 4:9-12, 2Thess. 1:3, Eph. 4:32, Rom. 13:8-10, Rom. 15:7, Matt. 25:31-46, Heb. 13:1-3, 3John 1:9-10, 1Tim. 5:10) **instead of** putting ourselves first, caring only for our immediate family and friends but not sharing with the poor. (See “feed and clothe the needy.”) (Rom. 15:1-2, 1Pet. 4:8-11)
- love even our enemies (Matt. 5:38-48, Luke 6:32-36, Rom. 12:20) **instead of** holding grudges and getting even (see “revenge” below). We are not responsible for how people treat us, but we ARE responsible for how we react to it. Our behavior reflects on our Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:16, 1Pet. 1:41-19, Lev. 19:16)
- share the gospel, make disciples (not "believers" - God does that) (Matt. 28:19-20, Rev. 22:17, Rom. 10:14-15, 1Cor. 1:17-31, 1Cor. 9:16-17, 1Cor. 15, 2Cor. 8:16-23, 2Cor. 10:15-18, 2Cor. 11:1-11, Gal. 1:6-12, Eph. 2-3,

Phil. 1:15-18, 1Thess. 2, 1Tim. 5:17-18, 2Tim. 2:1-9, 2Tim. 4:1-5, Heb. 4, Jam. 1:21-27, Jam. 2:14-26, 1Pet. 1) **instead of** thinking “our job here is done” when we have presented the Gospel and a person has received it. If they REJECT the Gospel, THEN we move on (but pray for God to soften their heart). If they accept, they are now our brothers in the Lord, whom we help with their needs, including how to flow Christ on the narrow road. The process of discipleship BEGINS at that point. (John 13:35, Matt. 7:13-14)

- speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15-32) with boldness, but also gentleness **instead of** telling people what they want to hear in order to seem “nice” and avoid being persecuted (which is salt that has lost its saltiness, or a lampstand hidden), or the opposite, beating people over the head with the Bible so that we cast stumbling blocks before them—possibly adding requirements that God did not specify, according to OUR preferences instead of the Bible. (2Tim. 4:1-4, Matt. 5:13-16, Acts 4:39-31, Eph. 6:18-20, Phil. 1:12-21, Matt. 10:26-33, Acts 5:29, Gal. 1:10, Phil. 1:27-30, 1Cor. 13:1-3, Acts 15:10, 15:19-20, Matt. 23:1-4) It’s only AFTER we are saved that God enables us to obey Him. (John 14:15-26, Titus 2:11-15, Phil. 2:12-16, Jam. 1:21)
- be baptized as an act of obedience to the command for believers **instead of** relying on infant “baptism” as “proof” that one is a “child of God.” It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit of the believer that saves and seals for redemption. (John 6:63, 2Cor. 1:21-22, Eph. 1:13-14, Eph. 4:30) The Bible does NOT say “be baptized so that you may believe.” We consciously accept the free gift of salvation and then obey Jesus’ command to be baptized in water, which is a joyful, memorable experience. (Matt. 28:19-20) We must be self-aware enough to understand what sin and its consequences are (circumcising our heart - Rom. 2:29), and to intend to turn from our unbelief and other sins. (Rom. 6) Those who are mentally incapable of understanding are not accountable for their sins. The penalty of death is for the actual transgressions, not for being born with the sinful nature. (Isa. 7:15-16, Rom. 5:12-13, Rom. 7:9)

*Now when they heard this **they were cut to the heart**, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “**Repent and be baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your **sins**, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children [this refers to relationship, not age] and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked*

*generation.” So **those who received his word were baptized**, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. Acts 2:37-41*

- observe the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him, proclaiming His death and resurrection until He returns (Luke 22:14-20, 1Cor. 11:23-34, John 6:60-63) **instead of** neglecting to gather together (Heb. 10:24-25), instead of thinking that Jesus is being sacrificed repeatedly in the bread and wine. (Heb. 9:24-28)
- study and KNOW the Bible—feed on the Word (Rom. 10:17, Col. 3:16, 1Tim. 1:3-11, 4:11-16, 2Tim. 2:14-19, 3:14-17, Eph. 4:11-16, Phil. 1:9-11, Col. 1:9-10, Heb. 5:11-14, Rom. 16:17-20, Titus 1:9-11, 2:1, 2John 1:9-11, 1Cor. 14:26, Psa. 119:105, Amos 8:11-12, Isa. 29:11-16) **instead of** wasting time consuming the worthless media this world has to offer, putting everything else before the word of God in priority so that there is “no time” left, or thinking we “know it all already” or that it’s “boring;” **instead of** just taking the word of others as to what it says, or going along with the flow—“blissfully unaware” that the “flow” is going AGAINST God. (Acts 17:11, Acts 20:29-31, 2Pet. 3:14-18, Matt. 7:13)
- pray TO GOD continually, from the heart for the genuine needs of ourselves and others (Heb. 1, Matt. 5:44, 9:37-38, Luke 18:1-8, 22:40, Rom. 8:26-27, Rom. 12:12, 2Cor. 1:11, Eph. 1:16, 6:16-20, Phil. 1:19, 4:4-9, Philem. 1:4-6, Col. 1:9-10, Col. 4:2-6, 1Thess. 5:16-18, 5:25, 2Thess. 1:11-12, 2Thess. 3:1-5, 2Tim. 2:1-4, 2:8, 2Tim. 1:3, Heb. 13:18-19, Jam. 5:13-20, 1John 5:16-17, Jude 1:20-21) **instead of** forgetting to pray at all, praying only when we need something, possibly only for ourselves, or praying “canned” prayers instead of using our own words. (Matt. 6:5-8, Mark 7:6-9)
- give thanks in all things (Rom. 14:6, 1Cor. 10:16, 2Cor. 2:14, 2Cor. 4:15, Eph. 1:16, 5:4, 5:20, Phil. 4:6, Col. 1:11-12, Col. 2:6-7, Col. 3:15-17, 1Thess. 5:16-18, 2Thess. 1:3, 2Thess. 2:13, 1Tim. 2:1-4, 2Tim. 1:3, Phil. 1:4-7, Heb. 13:15) **instead of** forgetting to be thankful at all (maybe even considering God’s answer to our prayers as a “coincidence”), or only being thankful IF we get our way.
- forgive (Matt. 6:14-15, Mark 11:25, Luke 6:37-38, Luke 7:36-50, Luke 17:3-4, John 20:23, 2Cor. 2:6-11, Eph. 4:32, Col. 3:12-13) **instead of** holding grudges, getting even (see “revenge” below), keeping lists of wrongs others have done against us (1Cor. 13:4-7), dwelling on the past instead of moving on. (Phil. 3:13-21)
- comfort one another (2Cor. 1:3-7, Rom. 12:15, Heb. 13:3, 10:32-34, Matt. 25:34-40, 1Cor. 12:26, Philem. 1:7) **instead of** being only concerned about our own problems. (Rom. 12:13, Heb. 13:2, 1Pet. 4:9)

- be humble (Matt. 11:29, 18:4, Matt. 23:5-12, Luke 14:7-11, Luke 18:9-14, Rom. 12:3, 12:16, Eph. 4:1-3, 5:21, Col. 3:12-13, Jam. 4:6-10, 1Pet. 3:8, 1Pet. 5:5-6) **instead of** exalting and promoting ourselves, being PROUD (1Cor. 1:25-31, 2Cor. 10:17, Gal. 6:14, 2Tim. 3:2-5), thinking we're better than others for whatever reason. (Gal. 6:3-5)
- gather together with believers, exhorting and encouraging one another (Heb. 10:24-25, 1Cor. 14:26) **instead of** staying away from gatherings of believers because they're imperfect (like us) or due to past hurts and offenses, etc. (False teachings/practices are valid reasons to leave a fellowship. The gathering of believers does NOT have to be in the form of a 501(c)(3) corporation, and probably shouldn't be, in a perfect world.)
- help feed and clothe the needy (Luke 12:32-34, 14:12-14, Mark 12:41-44, Rom. 12:13, Eph. 4:28, 1Tim. 6:17-19, Jam. 2:15-16, 1John 3:17-18) **instead of** being selfish and uncaring. Our blessings are from God and we are meant to share them for His glory (Jam. 1:17). Covetousness ( or envy or greed) is actually a form of idolatry, since such a person is not content with what God has given them, but wants to be in charge of their own "blessings." (Eph 5:5, Col. 3:5, Phil. 4:11-12, 1Tim. 6:6-12, 1Cor. 5:11, 1Cor. 6:9, Gal. 5:19-21)
- defend widows and orphans, seek justice (Jam. 1:27) **instead of** oppressing them or denying them justice, or looking the other way when others do so. (Isa. 1:12-20, Jer. 22:3, Luke 10:29-37)
- shine our light by doing good works (Matt. 5:13-16, Titus 2:14, 3:8, 3:14, Col. 1:9-12, Heb. 13:16, 2Tim. 2:20-21, John 15:8, Gal. 6:9-10) **instead of** hiding our light under a bushel, instead of accusing others who actually want to do God's will of being "self-righteous" because they make us feel guilty for indulging ourselves and blending in with the world. (Matt. 7:21-29)
- sing hymns and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19, 1Cor. 14:26, Col. 3:16) **instead of** singing songs with inappropriate lyrics, or even songs that have been "cleaned up" or SEEM "clean," but were not originally made to honor the one true God—but perhaps a false god, whether money, fame or some other "idol," including false religions (an example would be the popular song "My Sweet Lord" by George Harrison, with Hindu Hare Krishna lyrics at the end). (Eph. 4:29, 5:4, Col. 3:8, Heb. 13:15) We believers are the Church 24/7/365.25, not merely a small portion of one day a week. His Spirit in us leads us to desire to know and to do His will. (Phil. 2:12-16, Rom. 12:1-2)
- exercise self-control, including over our bodies, words and attitudes (1Cor. 9:24-27, 1Cor. 6:12-20, 2Cor. 12:20, 1Pet. 4:7, Eph. 4:26-27, 31, Gal. 5:16-25, 1Thess. 4:1-8, Titus 2:1-6, 2:11-15, 1Tim. 2:8, 1Tim. 3:1-13,

2Tim. 1:7, Jam. 3:2, Matt. 15:18-20, 2Pet. 1:5-6) **instead of** having fits of temper, cursing and swearing, slandering and gossiping, lying, practicing sexual immorality of ANY kind, harboring ill will toward others, envying, coveting, plotting revenge, scheming, refusing to accept correction and repent, avoiding carrying our share of the work load, exerting undue control over our fellow believers, rebelling against authority, etc. (See above paragraph and each of the topics mentioned in this comment.)

- remain faithful to our spouse until parted by death (except in cases of sexual immoral behavior by either party) (Matt. 19:3-9, Heb. 13:4, Mark 10:2-12, Eph. 5:22-33, Prov. 5:18-21, 1Cor. 6:9-20) **instead of** having affairs, seeking no-fault divorce because we aren't "in love" anymore/we "grew apart," or we don't like how our spouse is aging, we didn't "sign up" for anything except the good times, etc. (Matt. 5:27-32, Luke 16:18, Mal. 2:13-16, Mark 7:21-23)
- women submit to and respect their husbands (Eph. 5:22-24, 33, 1Pet. 3:5-6, Titus 2:4-5) **instead of** marching in women's rights rallies (sometimes with a docile husband in tow, often including the right to murder unborn babies and alter God's design and purpose for gender in the same rally), competing with them, going behind their backs, disparaging them to their friends and family (and even their own children), hounding them, arguing incessantly, etc. (Prov. 21:9, 25:24) A married couple is a team—the wife is to support her husband (and so she is called his "helper.") (Gen. 2:18, 1Cor. 11:8-9)
- men love and honor their wives (Eph. 5:25-33, 1Peter 3:7) **instead of** criticizing them for every little thing, demeaning them, complaining to their friends and family (and even their own children) about them, being unappreciative of their contribution to the household, being violent toward them, being overly controlling and demanding, looking at/lusting over other women, failing to provide for, protect and guide them in a godly way, etc. (Matt. 5:27-28, Jam. 1:19-21, Isa. 3:12)
- remain faithful to God forever, endure, persevere, hold fast (Matt. 10:22, 13:21, Matt. 24:12-13, Rom. 5:3-5, Rom. 13:8-10, Rom. 15:4-6, 1Cor. 15:1-2, 2Thess. 2:15, 2Tim. 1:13, 4:14, 6:18, 10:23, 1Tim. 6:11-12, 2Tim. 2:12, Heb. 10:32-39, Heb. 12:1-13, Jam. 1:2-4, 12, Jam. 5:10-11, 1Pet. 2:19-23, 2Pet. 1:5-11) **instead of** trampling the Son of God, profaning the blood of the covenant and outraging the Spirit of grace which sanctifies those who are saved. (Heb. 10:26-31) Instead of thinking that "a moment of [claimed] faith" saves a person, even if their heart is unchanged—even if they do not continue in that alleged faith to the end. (Col. 1:21-23, Heb. 3:5-6, Heb. 3:12-14, Rev. 2:7, 10-11, 25-28, Rev. 3:5, 11-12, 21, Rev. 17:14, Rev. 21:7-8)

- teach our children to respect God and follow Jesus (Luke 18:15-17, Prov. 22:6, Deut. 6:7, Matt. 18:5-10) **instead of** waiting until they are set in the wicked ways of the world and then “letting them decide” after the battle for their souls is already nearly lost (but thankfully, with God all things are possible. Matt. 19:25-26) (Prov. 13:24, 22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15, 29:17, 30:11-17)
- support the work of the kingdom of God (Rom. 15:25-29, Rom. 12:13, 2Cor. 8:1-15, 24, 2Cor. 9, Gal. 6:6, Phil. 1:3-8, 4:10-19, Heb. 13:6, 1John 3:18, 1Tim. 6:17-19, Prov. 3:9-10) with the firstfruits of the increase we have received from God **instead of** putting everything else in life first and claiming not to have anything left to share, instead of being unappreciative of our blessings and failing to give credit where it is due. (Rom. 1:21, Eph. 5:4, 5:20, Col. 3:15-17, 1Thess. 5:18, Matt. 6:24, Psa. 37:25-26)
- use our God-given gifts of all kinds for His glory, which includes building up the Body of Christ (1Cor. 12-13, Eph. 4:1-16, 1Pet. 4:10-11, 1Cor. 3:10-17, 1Cor. 10:23-24, 14:12, 14:26, Jude 1:17-20) **instead of** being selfish with our blessings of all kinds or “burying our talent in the ground” or “hiding our mina in a kerchief” out of FEAR (whether of people or even of failing God—He knows what gifts He has provided us to work with). (Matt. 25:14-30, Luke 19:11-27)
- examine our own walk with God (2Cor. 13:5, Gal. 6:3-5) **instead of** worrying about everyone else except ourselves (Rom. 14), being envious of the “fun” that the unsaved have or of what they “get away with,” or thinking that God doesn’t “see” our sin. (Acts 5:1-11, Psa. 37, Psa. 73, Psa. 94:8-11, Zeph. 1:12, Mal. 2:17, Mal. 3:14-18, Isa. 29:15-16, 1Cor. 10:6-13, 1Pet. 4:17-18)
- obey authorities and honor those placed in such positions (Matt. 22:15-22, Rom. 13:1-7, 1Pet. 2:12-20, 1Tim. 3:1-13, 1Tim. 5:17-25, 1Pet. 5:1-5, Titus 1:5-16, Titus 2:1-10, Titus 3:1-2, Heb. 13:17, Jude 1:8) **instead of** being jealous, disrespecting, undermining or rebelling against them. (1Pet. 3:13, Rom. 13:3, Prov. 16:7)
- rebuke our brother in the Lord if they sin (but deal with our own sin first) (Matt. 18:15-35, Luke 17:3-4, Matt. 7:1-6, John 7:24, Rom. 2:1-10) **instead of** refusing to forgive (see above) or interpreting the golden rule as “you look the other way for me when I sin, and I will do the same for you when you sin.” Neither hypocrites nor unrepentant sinners glorify God. (John 15:8) It makes NO sense to the unsaved that Jesus had to die for OUR sin so that we could continue in it. (John 8:34-36, Rom. 6:15-23, 2Pet. 2:18-22)

- bring back sinners from straying (Gal. 6:1, Jam. 5:19-20, Jude 1:23) **instead of** reassuring them of their salvation, despite the lack of fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:16-25, 1Cor. 5:5) Fruitless branches or branches with BAD fruit will be cut off and burned. (John 15:1-10, Matt. 3:10-12, Matt. 12:33-35, Luke 6:42-49)
- correct opponents with gentleness so they may repent (2Tim. 2:23-26, Jude 1:22-23, 1Pet. 3:8-17, 2Pet. 3, Titus 3:1-2) **instead of** being a "gong," telling them God hates both them and their sin, or just letting them go without even trying to reason with them. (1Cor. 13:1-7, John 3:16-18, Acts 14:1, 28:23-24, 2Pet. 3:15)
- trust God, rely on His strength (John 10:37-38, John 14:10-12, Col. 1:29, 1Cor. 1:4-9, 25:10, 2Cor. 12:9-10, Phil. 4:13, 1Thess. 3:11-13, Prov. 3:5-8, Mal. 4:1-3, Heb. 13:6) **instead of** putting our trust in ourselves or other people (including the government, courts and civil servants). (Psa. 147:10-11, Jam. 4:13-16, Prov. 21:31, 1Sam. 17:46-47, Psa. 26, Psa. 43:1)
- walk in the Spirit, live to God not ourselves (Eph. 6, 1Pet. 5:6-11) **instead of** indulging our old, sinful nature. (Col. 1:10, Col. 3:5-17, 1Cor. 10:6-13, 2Cor. 5:9, 5:14-15, Eph. 4:17-32, 2Tim. 2:4, 1John 3:21-24, 1Pet. 4:1-5, 1Pet. 1:13-19, 2Pet. 1:3-15)
- dress modestly (1Tim. 2:9-10) **instead of** dressing provocatively like the world around us, which does not know God or His ways, or by trying to impress others with our materialism (again, like the world). (1Pet. 3:3-4, Eph. 4:17-24)
- cover a woman's head when praying or prophesying (1Cor. 11:1-16), **instead of** ignoring the passage altogether as a "custom" of that day (2Thess. 2:15) OR instead of covering ALL of the time despite the passage specifying certain times. It is my understanding through study that "because of the angels" and "symbol of authority" are indications that the prayer referred to is corporate (since we are to pray unceasingly in our spirit). (You should conduct your own study with the guidance of the Holy Spirit - 1John 2:27, John 14:26). The passage also includes a glimpse into God's heart and intentions when it says that woman is the glory of man and her hair is her glory, and so it is a shame to cut or shave it off. The "symbol" is NOT the woman's hair itself, nor is it her husband. It makes no sense to say that if a woman refuses to cover her hair then she should cut it off (in shame) if the covering IS her hair. The hierarchy of authority is the reason for the symbol, not the symbol itself (God->Jesus-> man->woman), just as the Father sent the Son, at whose request the Spirit was sent. (John 6:38-40, 10:25-30, 14:10, 14:16-21, 16:13-15, Eph. 5:22-33) This is not demeaning, but orderly; not of lesser value, but functioning as God wills.

- be content in all circumstances (Phil. 2:14-16, Phil. 4:4-13, 1Cor. 10:9-11, Jam. 5:7-9, Heb. 13:5, 17, 1Pet. 4:9, 1Tim. 6:6-10) **instead of** complaining, coveting what others have, being greedy, trying to get what we “need” (i.e. want) by our own power. (Jam. 4:2-4, 1Cor. 10:9-10, Jude 1:16, Titus 2:7-8, Psa. 37:25-26, Prov. 30:7-9)
- resist temptation, pass tests and remain steadfast in trials of faith by trusting in God’s mighty power and perfect ways (John 16:33, Matt. 19:29, Gal. 6:1, 1Cor. 9:24-27, 1Cor. 10:12-14, 1Pet. 1:6-9, 2Cor. 4:7-11, 16-18, Jam. 5:7-11, Rev. 21:7-8, Isa. 48:10, Luke 21:34-36, 1John 3:11-15, 2Thess. 2:4-12) **instead of** shrinking back due to fear of people or anything else. (Heb. 10:32-39, Acts 20:18-26, Rev. 2:10, Rev. 3:18-19)
- carry our cross, follow Jesus, fulfill our calling (Matt. 5:10-12, Matt. 10:37-42, Matt. 16:24-27, Mark 8:34-38, Luke 9:23-26, 1Tim. 6:12, 2Tim. 1:8-14, 2Tim. 2:1-10, 2Pet. 1:5-13, Phil. 1:7-30, Heb. 13:11-13, John 15:18-25, Heb. 10:26-31, 1John 1:5-2:6, 1John 2:28-29, 1John 3:1-10) **instead of** turning back, leaving the narrow, difficult road and traveling the broad, easy path. (Luke 9:57-62, Luke 13:23-30)

REFRAIN from:

- idolatry (loving or honoring anything or anyone above or in place of God) (Matt. 22:36-37, Mark 12:28-30, Luke 10:25-28, Matt. 10:37, Matt. 6:24, Luke 16:13, Rom. 1:28-32, 2Tim. 3:1-5, 1Cor. 5:9-13, 1Cor. 6:9-10, 1Cor. 10:19-22, Gal. 5:19-25, 1Pet. 4:1-5, Col. 3:5-10, Jam. 4:4-10, Rev. 21:8, 22:15, Isa. 42:8) **and instead**, be faithful, like He is in all of His ways. (Deu. 7:9-15, Psa. 100:5, Psa. 145:3, 1Chron. 16:34, 1Cor. 1:9, 2Thess. 3:3, 1John 1:9, Prov. 3:1-4)
- partaking of evil and deeds of darkness (Matt. 6:22-23, John 3:19-21, Rom. 1:28-32, 1Pet. 3:12, Psa. 37, Psa. 73, 2Tim. 3:1-5, 3John 1:11) **and instead**, abstain from and expose them. (1Thess. 5:22, Eph. 5:3-17, Rom. 12:9, 1Pet. 4:3-5, Luke 12:2-3)
- gossip (which might be true but is still forbidden), slander (untrue, spoken) and libel (untrue, written) (Jam. 1:26, Jam. 4:11-12, Matt. 15:18-20, Mark 7:21-23, Matt 15:19-20, Rom. 1:29-30, 2Cor. 12:20, Col. 3:5-10, Eph. 4:31, 1Tim. 3:11, 2Tim. 3:1-5, Titus 2:3-8, 3:1-3, 1Pet. 2:1, 3John 1:10) **and instead**, restrict our speech (and writings) to what edifies the hearer. (Matt. 12:36-37, Eph. 4:15-16, 29, 5:4, 2Cor. 6:7, Col. 4:6, 1Tim. 4:12)
- taking revenge (Matt. 5:38-41, Prov. 20:22, 2Tim. 3:1-5, Rom. 12:17-21, 2Thess. 2:5-10, Lev. 19:18) **and instead**, let God handle the defense of our character and take vengeance against anyone who harms us, but remain

blameless in our own conduct at all times. (Prov. 20:22, Heb. 10:30-31, 1Pet. 3:15-16, 2Pet. 3:14-18, Titus 2:7-8, Phil. 2:14-16, Psa. 11, 18, 31, 37, 64, 91, 94, Psa. 7:1, 34:19, 43:1, 71:1-5, 72:4, 141:8-10, 142:5-7, 143L9-12, Luke 12:11-12, Prov. 18:10, Nah. 1:1-9, Zech. 3:11-15)

- suing brothers in the Lord (1Cor. 6:1-8) **and instead**, be willing to suffer financial loss rather than bring shame to the household of God. (Luke 12:13-34, 1Pet. 2:11-12, Col. 3:5, Titus 2:7-8, Phil. 2:14-16)
- foolishness, coarse language and crude jokes (Eph. 4:29-32, 5:4, Mark 7:21-23, Rom. 1:29-30, Col. 3:5-10, 2Tim. 3:1-5, Jam. 3:2-12), knowing that our behavior always reflects on our Father in heaven, **and instead**, glorify God through graceful speech, give Him praise, singing psalms, exhort one another to run the good race, fight the good fight, do good works, and remain steadfast. (Psa. 37:30, Eph. 5:18-21, Col. 3:12-17, Jam. 5:13, Phil. 4:8-9, Heb. 10:23-25, 32-39, 1Cor. 9:24-27, 1Tim. 6:11-12, Heb. 12, Jam. 1:12-16, 5:10-11, 2Pet. 1:5-15)
- sexual immorality (any sexual intimacy outside of marriage of a man and woman), which defiles God's temple because believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 13:11-14, 1Cor. 5:9-13, 1Cor. 6:9-20, 1Cor. 7:2, 1Cor. 10:8, Eph. 5:3-12, Mark 7:21-23, 2Cor. 12:21, Col. 3:5-10, 2Tim. 3:1-5, Gal. 5:19-25, 1Pet. 4:1-5, Matt. 15:18-20, Acts 15:20, 28-29, 1Thess. 4:1-8, 1Tim. 1:8-10, Heb. 12:14-17, Jude 1, Rev. 2:14, 2:20-23, Rev. 21:8, 22:15) **and instead**, restrict intimate relations to those between a man and woman who are married. (Matt. 19:4-6, Heb. 13:4, Gen. 2:24-25)
- drunkenness (Matt. 24:48-51, Rom. 13:13, Titus 2:3, Prov. 20:1, 1Cor. 6:9-10, 1Cor. 11:20-22, Gal. 5:19-25, 1Thess. 5:5-8, 1Tim. 3:3, 8, 1Pet. 4:1-5) **and instead**, be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 5:18-21, Acts 13:52)
- lying/dishonesty (Col. 3:5-10, 1Cor. 5:9-13, 1Cor. 6:9-10, Matt. 15:18-20, 1Tim. 1:8-10, Rev. 21:8, 22:15, Jam. 3:2-12) **and instead**, remain truthful at all times—how will people believe our testimony of God's goodness if we are liars? (Eph. 4:25, Prov. 30:8, Jam. 5:12, Lev. 19:11-12, Ezek. 39:7)
- sorcery, necromancy, acting as or consulting mediums or psychics (Gal. 5:16-25, Rev. 21:8, 22:15, Ex. 22:18, Lev. 19:26, 19:31, 20:6, 20:27, Deu. 18:10-11, Isa. 8:19, 1Chron. 10:13, 2Kings 21:6). **Instead of** seeking knowledge or anything else through pagan practices, we must trust in God and wait for Him. We need to hold to the traditions for the Church as detailed in the New Testament, not according to men's ways (or false religions), even if longstanding and accepted. (1Cor. 10:21-22, 2Thess. 2:15, Col. 2:16-23, 1Tim. 4, 2Tim. 1:13-14, 1Tim. 1:8-11, 1Tim. 6:3-5, Titus 1:9, 2:1, 2Pet. 3:14-18)

- coveting (desiring what others have, being discontented with what God has provided, greed, gluttony, envy, jealousy) (Matt. 6:24, Eph. 5:3, 1Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19, Phil. 4:11-12, Jam. 5:1-6, Heb. 13:5, 2Tim. 3:1-5, Jude 1:11, 16, Rom. 13:8-10, 1Cor. 5:9-13, 1Cor. 6:9-10, 1Cor. 10:10, Gal. 5:19-25, 1Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7, Jam. 4:1-3, Col. 3:5-10, Jam. 3:13-18) **and instead**, be grateful for our blessings, giving thanks for them to God. (See “give thanks” above.)
- stealing (Eph. 4:28, Mark 7:21-23, Rom. 13:8-10, 1Cor. 6:9-10, Matt. 15:18-20, Prov. 30:7-9) **and instead**, restore anything we have taken (and more), be content with what we have, and work for what we need, if we are physically able. (Luke 19:8-9, 2Thess. 3:6-15, also see coveting.)
- murder (Mark 7:21-23, Rom. 13:8-10, Jam. 4:1-3, Matt. 15:18-20, 1Tim. 1:8-10, Rev. 21:8, 22:15) **and instead**, love our neighbor as ourselves, and even show kindness to our enemies. (Lev. 19:18, Mark 12:28-34, Matt. 5:43-48, Rom. 12:19-21, Rom. 13:8-14, Gal. 5:13-15, Jam. 2:8-26)
- idleness (2Thess. 3:6-15, 1Tim. 5:3-16, 1Thess. 4:11-12) **and instead**, work in order to have something to share with others (if able). (Eph. 4:28, Prov. 18:9, Heb. 13:16, Gal. 6:6-10, 1Tim. 6:17-19)
- fits of temper (Jam. 1:19-21, 2Cor. 12:20, Gal. 5:19-21, 1Tim. 2:8, 1Tim. 3:1-13, Eph. 4:26-27, 31) **and instead**, rely on the Holy Spirit for help controlling ourselves. (Gal. 5:22-24, Rom. 8:13-18, Rom. 6:4, 2Cor. 5:17)
- pride in any form of anything (except knowing the Lord and what He has done for us), seeking our own glory (Luke 20:45-47, Mark 7:21-23, Rom. 1:29-30, 2Cor. 12:20, Mal. 4:1-3, 2Tim. 3:1-5, Jude 1:16, Gal. 5:19-26, Titus 1:7, Prov. 27:2) **and instead**, acknowledge that all blessings come from Him as the designer, maker and owner of everything, including us; and give Him the glory for all He is, Has done and is going to do. (1Cor. 4:6-8, Rev. 3:15-17, Psa. 19, 24, 50, 95, 100, 104, 118, 147, Psa. 69:30, 105:1-5, 1Chron. 16:8-13, 23-36, Heb. 13:15)
- taking credit or giving it to another for what God has done (Rom. 1:18-21, Heb. 12:25-29, Isa. 42:8, 48:11) **and instead**, (see above).
- loving the world and its ways (Jam. 4:4-10, 1John 2:15-17) **and instead**, recognize the error of its fallen ways and separate from it as God intends for His called-out children. (2Cor. 6:14-7:1, 1Cor. 15:33-34, Rev. 18:4-5, John 15:19, Eph. 4:17, 1Thess. 4:3-8, 2Pet. 2:12, 2Pet. 4:3-5)
- being wise in our own eyes or that of the world, but being foolish in God’s sight (Rom. 12:16, Isa. 5:21) **and instead**, seek the wisdom from above, recognizing that those living in darkness are not wise and cannot understand

spiritual things or accept God's higher ways. They do NOT know the way to eternal life. (Psa. 37:30, Isa. 55:8-9, Jam. 3:13-18, Eph. 1:17, Col. 1:9, 28, Rom. 11:33-36, 1Cor. 1:18-31, 1Cor. 2:14, 1Cor. 3:18-20, Col. 2:23, 3:16, 4:5, Jam. 1:5-8, Mark 7:20-22, Matt. 7:24-27, Matt. 25:1-13, 2Tim. 3:6-9, Col. 2:23, John 14:6, 1John 3:24)

- taking the Lord's name in vain (for no purpose or even worse yet, for a profane purpose) (Ex. 20:7, Psa. 139:20, Jude 1:14-19, Prov. 30:7-9) **and instead**, be mindful that God is holy and so is His name, which not only identifies Him, but describes His eternal, perfect nature. (Luke 1:49, Rev. 15:4, Lev. 22:32, Psa. 103:1-5, Isa. 47:4, 57:15, Ezek. 39:7)
- fearing men, worrying (Matt. 6:25-34, Phil. 4:6-7, Heb. 13:6, Gal. 1:10, 1Thess. 2:3-8, Matt. 10:24-28, Col. 3:23-24, John 15:18-25) **and instead**, trust and obey God in all things. (Prov. 3:5-8, 6:3, Psa. 127:1, Phil. 4:6-7, also see "trust God" above.)
- making oaths (let our word be good without "swearing" by anything) (Matt. 5:33-37, Jam. 5:12) **and instead**, speak plainly and keep our word. (Col. 3:9-10, Lev. 19:11, Eph. 4:25, Zech. 8:16, Ecc. 5:4-5, Psa. 119:57)
- judging our brothers in the Lord for the way they serve God or exercise matters not dealing with sin but with personal choice (Rom. 14, Gal. 5:15, Jam. 4:11-12, 1Cor. 4:5) **and instead**, build one another up in the Lord, appreciate and support one another in our various works given to us by God to do. (Rom. 12:3-8, 11, 1Cor. 12:12-27, Col. 3:23-25, Eph. 2:10, Titus 2:14, 3:8, 3:14, John 15:8, Matt. 5:16)
- associating with people who lead us astray (2John 1:7-11, 1Cor. 5:9-13) **and instead**, realize that the company we keep can either help us grow in the Lord, or draw us away from Him. (1Cor. 15:33-34, Matt. 10:34-49, 2Cor. 6:14-7:1)
- casting stumbling blocks before anyone to cause them to sin, approving of sin (Rom. 1:32, 1Thess. 4:1-8, Rom. 14:13-23) **and instead**, stand firm in the truth, in love, and help others escape the snare of the devil. (Jude 1:17-23, 1Cor. 10:12-13, Gal. 6:1, Jam. 5:19-20)
- causing dissension, division, strife (1Cor. 1:10-13, 1Tim. 6:3-5, Gal. 5:19-25, 1Tim. 3:3, Jam. 3:2-12, Lev. 19:16) **and instead**, live in peaceful harmony as much as possible (without disobeying God). (Rom. 12:18, Acts 2:47, 1Tim. 4:12, 1Tim. 3:10-17, Jam. 3:13-18, 1Pet. 1:14-19, 1Pet. 2:11-12, 3:14-18)
- giving gifts or donations in order to get recognition, pursuing honor for ourselves (Matt. 6:1-6, Mark 12:38-44, Luke 20:45-47) **and instead**, give

in secret, storing treasure in heaven. (Luke 6:32-36, Matt. 6:19-21, 19:21, Luke 12:32-34, Matt. 10:40-42, 1Tim. 6:18-19 )

- showing partiality based on wealth or position (Jam. 2:1-13, 3:17, Matt. 22:16, Mark 12:14, Luke 10:21, Acts 10:34-35, Rom. 6:2-11, Gal 2:6, 3:28, Eph. 6:9, Col. 3:11, 3:25, 1Tim. 5:20-21, Jude 1:16) **and instead**, be fair and just no matter whether someone is rich or poor, famous or “ordinary,” like us or different, young or old, male or female, Jew or Greek. (Rom. 2:6-11, 10:12, Ex. 23:1-9, Ex. 22:21-24, Deu. 24:17-22, 27:16-19, Lev. 19:13-18, 32-37, Psa. 37:30, 94:6-7, Isa. 1:15-17, 23, 10:1-4, Jer. 5:26-31, Ezek. 22:7, 22:29-31, Zech. 7:8-14, Amos 8:4-6)
- worshiping by rote, ritual and traditions of men (Matt. 15:7-9, Mark 7:8, John 4:23-24, Rom. 7:6, 8:2, Gal. 3:2, 2Cor. 3:2-18, Matt. 5:8) **and instead**, worship in spirit and truth, offering our bodies (including our entire lives) as living, holy sacrifices. (Rom. 12:1-2, 1Cor. 6:18-20, 1Cor. 3:16-17)
- entering controversies and vain arguments, being contentious (2Tim. 2:14, 23-26, 1Tim. 6:3-5, 2Cor. 13:11, 2Cor. 12:20, Phil. 4:5, Titus 3:1-2, 9-10, Titus 1:7, Heb. 12:14, Jam. 3:2-12, 4:1-4, Matt. 5:9, Rom. 12:18) **and instead**, correct opponents with gentleness, hoping that they will come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved; and submit to God when it comes to differences regarding the understanding of sound doctrine (also see “sorcery” above). (Jude 1:22-23, 2Tim. 2:23-26)
- listening to false teachers (2Cor. 4:1-5, 11:13-15, 2Thess. 2:15, 1Tim. 1:3-11, 1Tim. 4, 1Tim. 6:3-21, 2Tim. 1:13-14, 2Tim. 2:14-26, 2Pet. 3, Titus 1:9-16, Titus 2, Heb. 13:7-9,) **and instead**, recognize them by their fruits. (2Cor. 11:13-15, Acts 20:28-31, 2Tim. 3:1-4:5, Jude 1:3-23, Matt. 7:15-29, Matt. 12:33-35, Luke 6:39-39, Matt. 3:7-12, Rom. 6:20-23, Gal. 5:19-21, Rom. 7:4-6, John 15:1-10, Eph. 5:9, Phil. 1:11, Col. 1:10, Heb. 12:11, Jam. 3:13-18)
- drinking blood or eating meat that has been strangled (Acts 15:20, 28-29, 21:25), because the life is in the blood, and the shedding of the blood makes atonement for sins. (Lev. 17:11, Heb. 9:22-28, 1John 1:7-9, Rev. 5:9-10) The part about strangling is not clarified, but there is a connection in that it kills by stopping circulation. Common sense tells us that animals for food should be both raised and slaughtered humanely.
- eating meat that we KNOW was sacrificed to an idol (for the sake of those who think that such things have power) (1Cor. 10:23-33, Acts 15:20, 28-29) **and instead**, abstain from eating anything that might cause our weaker brother in the Lord to stumble by giving the appearance that we are honoring a god that doesn’t exist. (1Cor. 8, 1Cor. 10:19-22)

- covering a man's head while praying or prophesying (1Cor. 11:1-16), **instead of** going along with traditions of men where male believers (often specifically those in leadership) in some faiths wear something on their head. In the same passage, Paul also indicates that men should cut their hair rather than growing it long like women. Most interpret it these days as customs of those days that we may safely ignore. For myself, I feel that although it's far from the most important issue, once we choose to disregard one passage, then it becomes easier to do the same with the next one we dislike and so on. The reason given is NOT "custom"—that is the reason that no one should argue about Paul's instructions given by his authority from God. (2Thess. 2:15, 2Cor. 10:8, 13:10, 1Thess. 4:2, 8—Paul says so if he is stating his preference. 1Cor. 7:6, 10, 2Cor. 8:8) The reason given is that Jesus is the head of man, who is God's glory, and also "because of the angels" (who are presumably observing our gatherings to worship). (Also see "covering a woman's head" above.)
- exercising our freedom in such a way that causes a weaker brother to stumble (1Cor. 8) **and instead**, be willing to give up some of our freedoms for the sake of our weaker brother whose conscience convicts him of sin despite his freedom in Christ. (1Cor. 10:23-33) (This is NOT permission to be sexually immoral or to deliberately do any other activity that dishonors God. We are set free FROM sin, not TO sin. Matt. 18:6-9, 1Thess. 4:1-8, 1John 1:5-2:6, 2:28-29, 1John 3:1-10, Rom. 13:11-14)

The above guidelines are for believers who are following Christ to observe. They are meant to be obeyed out of LOVE, gratitude and respect. They are NOT meant to put us back "under the law" with legalism and self-righteousness. We don't save ourselves—we obey because we are saved. Each person should test their own heart to see how much of themselves they are willing to give to God. The more we know Him, the more we will love and trust Him so that the same things that please Him will please us, and we will be motivated to do His will, for His glory. The rewards are GREAT. Take a look at Rev. 2-3, Rev. 20:4-6, Rev. 21:7-8, 22:14-15, Col. 3:23-25, 1Cor. 2:9, Heb. 10:35-39, 1Cor. 3:11-15, 2John 1:8, Jam. 1:12, 2:5, 1Cor. 9:24-27, 1John 3, 2Tim. 4:6-8, 2Tim. 2:3-7, Heb. 6:11-12, Heb. 12, Matt. 25:14-46, Luke 19:11-27.

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