

*The Articles of*  
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## ...In Purity

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As the first issue draws to a close, we look once again at our subject: *“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers”* (I Timothy 4:12). We have looked at many areas in which young Christians can be examples to others. Now let’s look at the subject of purity.

Purity is a central theme in the Bible. In II Corinthians 11:3, Paul says, *“lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ”* (II Corinthians 11:3). From the very beginning, Satan has tried his best to complicate the plain, simple, and pure teachings given to mankind from God. Contamination of something pure is only takes one impurity. Satan added one simple, three letter word to the commandment of God and the commandment was changed completely. Eve did what God told her not to do and was punished, even though she was deceived. Since the beginning of time, God’s word has stood in stark contrast to Satan’s lies.

How do we keep ourselves pure? The psalmist also asked the question, *“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word”* (Psalms 119:9). Living according to His statutes can keep us pure. Living a life pleasing to God is described as being *“in the light”* and those *“in darkness”* are those who defiled themselves with the cares of this world (I John 1). We only have two choices in this life. We are going to serve God or Satan. We are going to be pure or sinful.

This could be the reason why the path of purity is described by Jesus as *“narrow”* and *“difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it”* (Matthew 7:14). With Satan’s control of the media, the young are in more danger than ever before. Sometimes for the sake of fitting in, we allow ourselves to listen to music with bad language or watch a movie with friends that contain a number of sinful situations. We can see why Paul had the fear he had because often these subtle temptations are paid for by our parents. The choice not to engage in these contaminating influences may isolate you and you may lose some of your “friends,” but take courage!

God has promised that you can endure anything Satan chooses to throw at you! In I Corinthians 10:13, God promises that you can overcome all temptations because He provides the way of escape. Living according to God’s laws will cause you to be sanctified from those of the world (John 17:17). Those who live in darkness do not like the light because *“everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God”* (John 3:20-21).

With so many people around us who living immorally, living purely will cause you to shine even brighter! The older generation will take courage when they see the youth that are examples of purity. Your good example will encourage those who are older and all those who “ride the fence” between light and darkness to draw closer to God. Remember, fire does not lose any of its brightness by lighting another fire.

*-January 2008*



# How to Change the World

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If you were to ask children what they hope to be when they grow up, you would receive a variety of answers. At the heart of all their answers would be one principle: they want to make a difference. Continuing through life into adolescence and teenage years, this aspiration continues, but somewhere along the way most lose it. Difficulties arrive and hardships settle in. Instead of standing fast to convictions and world-changing goals, a compromise is struck. After several years and many compromises, we are content to just live. Has the chance to change the world past? Certainly not!

When Jesus came into this world, He came to change it entirely. Jesus came to “*seek and save the lost*” (Luke 19:10). The lost make up the entire world, and all of us are lost at least at one point in our lives (Romans 3:23). God desires that all men everywhere repent and be saved (Acts 17:30, I Timothy 2:4). If we can follow the example of Christ and His apostles, we can have the same effect on the world. We are not discussing starting a new religion, but taking the same truths that changed the first century and changing the world around us today.

How did Jesus approach evangelism? What did Jesus teach the apostles to do? If we could find the answers to these questions, then we could have the same results. After all, there is “*nothing new under the sun*” (Ecclesiastes 1:9) and that includes humanity and God’s truth. God’s word is “*quick and powerful*” today and will continue to be until we meet Him in heaven (Hebrews 4:12).

This will be the first article in a series addressing the subject of evangelism. The series will be an analysis of Jesus’ approach to changing the world and the effect it had on the first century. The author does not claim to be an expert in the field of evangelism, so he will be relying on God’s word, interviews of older evangelists, many books, and hours of research. May these articles aid you and may we all work together for the glory of God.

*-February 2008*

# Changing the World Begins in Your Mind

How does one change the world? Where does one begin? When setting out to make a difference in the world, one has to go no further than their own mind. The first step to changing others around us is making sure that we are living the changes we would like to see in others. As Jesus phrased it, *“Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye”* (Matthew 7:4-5).

It all begins in the mind. The writer of Proverbs informs us, *“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he”* (Proverbs 23:7). One cannot do anything without first deciding to in his mind/heart. This may seem elementary to some. You might actually be thinking, “Wow, that’s profound. Of course I can’t do anything without thinking it in my mind first.” What is one of the most popular things to do when your caught doing something wrong? “I didn’t mean to!” “I don’t know why I said that, I didn’t mean it!” And on the story goes. This does not limit itself to the young but adults do the same. “I was caught in the moment and lost my head.” With no exception to situation, you must first think of something before you can do it. In the New Testament we live under today, Christ explained why thinking about adultery is condemned and not just the act or saying you hate your brother is the same as killing him (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28). *“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks”* (Luke 6:45).

By controlling our thoughts, we can control our attitude and our actions. The man that does not covet will never steal. The man that never lusts after a woman will not commit fornication. It all comes down to controlling our thoughts. Job made a covenant with his eyes that he would not look upon young women (Job 31:1). By avoiding the temptation all together, he avoided the sin. If you have a problem drinking, don’t go around alcohol. If you have a problem with saying things you shouldn’t, stay away from those subjects or the group that brings those things out of you.

When your mind is right, everything else will fall into place. Consider the words of Paul: *“Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind”* (Philippians 3:15-16). In verse 15, Paul says the key to being of the same mind is having a mature mindset as he did and in verse 16 it comes by walking by the same rule. These two are the same. You cannot think like a mature Christian and practice evil. You cannot think evil and be a true Christian. It is impossible.

This is extremely important to evangelism. People watch and observe Christians all the time. Many are looking for a disciple of Christ to sin and then they feel that they can justify their own sinful life. Some are watching to see if we “practice what we preach.” Hypocrites can ruin a church faster than anything else. We cannot tell others what they should or shouldn’t do until we are living the Christian life. This does not mean one has to be perfect before setting off to take the gospel to others. What this means is that if we are going to hold others to the standard of the Bible, we have to hold ourselves to it first. Everyone knows that Christ alone was perfect. By avoiding evil situations, thinking maturely, living right before God, and preparing ourselves first to get to heaven, we can truly begin to seek and save the lost.

*-April 2008*

# By This They Will Know That You Are My Disciples

The sun had set and the meal was finished. The Messiah turns to the disciple that would betray Him and says, *“What you do, do quickly.”* No one quite understands what has taken place; none but two. His disciples shrug the exchange off as something trivial; perhaps He has asked him to buy the supplies for the feast or give money to the poor. No one knew of the plot to take their Savior’s life; none but two. With the thoughts of His betrayal fresh in His mind, He now turns to His faithful disciples, *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”* (John 13:33-35).

The defining quality of Christ’s disciples would be the love they had for one another. This would be something that would set them apart from every other person on the face of the earth. Love is one, if not the most, sought after things on this earth and it would be the difference between Christ’s disciples and Satan’s. How does one know if they have true love? What is love?

It must be understood that love is of God, as John states: *“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God... God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him”* (I John 4:7, 16). God is the embodiment of love; love in its purest form. By becoming godly, we will naturally be exhibiting love. Love is more than the “warm feeling” we have when we are around people we like. Love is deeper than that. It certainly includes those feelings but it is selling love short of what it truly is to confine love into such a small box dependent on our emotions.

If we fulfill the commandments of God we are said to have love (II John 6). God has done so much for us, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). If there were ever a demonstration of love that would be it! *“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”* (I John 4:10). In the gift of His Son, God showed us how to love. Christ’s death was a fulfillment of prophesy, and an example of someone willing to pay the ultimate price for a people that were undeserving. Christ did not die for humanity when it wanted to follow Him. He died when one of His own had betrayed Him, the other disciples denied Him, and while His own people called for His crucifixion in blind hatred! He prayed that *“this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will”* (Matthew 26:39). His love caused Him to die for us! His love caused Him to be an obedient Son! His love opened the door of grace and mercy that we now enter through to be saved! His love was much more than lip service and warm feelings.

Now we know what is love. Love is a fulfillment of God’s law, motivated by our care for God and others. Now the question must be asked, do WE have love? If someone were to

come in among us, would they leave knowing they had been in the presence of love? Christ spent hours and hours of His day while on earth with His disciples. The three or so years that He ministered, were spent in large part with His disciples. In the closing days before His death, He shared almost every moment with them teaching and comforting them for what would come. That is what love does. Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians, *“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails”* (I Corinthians 13:4-8). Is this how we describe ourselves? Do we *“suffer long”* with our brethren or do we head for the door after the worship service is over? Do we *“behave rudely”* and *“seek our own”* amongst ourselves? Love does not do these things. Love bears its brothers’ and sisters’ burdens. Love is not provoked to anger, despite the inconvenience it may be put through. Love never fails.

Before we can change the world and convert the lost, we must fix ourselves. This includes us as individuals and us as a group. God loves us and calls us through His love. If we love Him as He loved us, we will keep His commandments and we will enjoy His love for all eternity. Oh what a day that will be, when He comes in His Glory! We close now with a psalm written to God in praise: *“Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let such as love Your salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified!”* (Psalms 40:16). AMEN.

*-June 2008*