

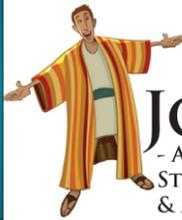
C.S. Lewis

BROKEN BREAD Page 03



SETTING HIGHER STANDARDS OF ETHICAL
CHRISTIAN LIVING

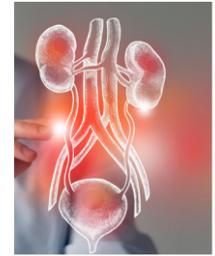
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JOSEPH
- A MAN OF STEADFAST ETHICS & MORALITY

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ILLUMINER

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JANUARY 2023

Christian Life: A Mandate to Live Out the Gospel

"A gospel-centric lifestyle of a community distinguishes it from the larger society, bearing an effective witness than the oral proclamation of the gospel."



Mahatma Gandhi is known to have said about Christianity, "I like your Christ, but I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike Christ." Gandhi was one of those leaders the gospel had considerably influenced, yet his critique of Christians deeming Christ unattractive is alarming. When the gospels project a Christ, critical of oppressive religious and socio-political structures but sensitive to human needs and empathising, it is natural to expect Christians to reflect similar attitudes.

Studies across the world on Christianity report attitudes and

behaviours among Christians that have repulsed non-Christians from Christ. Canadian-born American theologian and social activist, Ronald Sider titles his book rather provocatively. In "The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience", Sider laments that; "Scandalous behavior is rapidly destroying American Christianity. By their daily activity, most "Christians" regularly commit treason. With their mouths they claim that Jesus is Lord, but with their actions they demonstrate allegiance to money, sex, and self-fulfillment." Not merely in

the Americas, Christianity draws similar blame from across the world. Through its prying eyes of social media, the scrutinising world is eager to expose Christians' misconduct, tagging it as hypocrisy.

The onus upon Christians is undoubtedly huge to live up to Christ and his teachings. Knowing this, Apostle Paul urged his communities to confirm their lifestyle with that of the gospel. In Ephesians, he encourages the community to 'lead a life' worthy of their calling (4:1). This call is



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FEBRUARY
Discipleship/ self-denial and sacrifice

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Be ye
THEREFORE
perfect, even
AS YOUR
FATHER
in heaven is
PERFECT



MATTHEW 5:48

FROM THE editor



I recently found a news item that the police could not press any charges on a group of people who practised “wife swapping” because they did it with mutual consent. In the present scenario, everyone faces numerous complex questions of fashion, food, use of social media, money and resources, political ideology and actions, marriages, and parenting challenges from the perspective of Christian ethos. Issues Christians face today include abortion, divorce, gender identity, euthanasia, organ donation, and numerous others. How does one determine right and wrong or good or bad in practical life without compromising the ethical principles of Scripture? Numerous factors affect the choices people make today. Norman L. Geisler, a leading ethicist, summarises the foundation of ethics as power, pleasure, human survival, and God's will. Exposure to different world views, customs, and practices, through rapid movements across the globe and highly advanced means of communication, people come across numerous value systems and norms that make moral judgement and choices complex and chaotic. As a result, the question of right and wrong or good and evil is perceived through different lenses. Apart from Christian ethics, people encounter other lenses such as social justice, naturalist, and scientific worldviews. Thus, a critical question for a Christian ethicist is how morality (the practice) or ethics (ideas about the practice) depends on religion (convictions and commitments) or theology (critical discussion about those convictions and commitments).

A profound awareness of moral choices firmly grounded on ethical principles derived from theological articulation is inevitable to avoid two extremes: a) Nihilism that proposes no absolute value, purpose, meaning, or truth and b) Subjectivism that asserts values, purpose

"The moral choices we make as Christians are justified when it is perceived in the light of the righteousness and love of God as revealed through Christ."

and truth are relative and subjective to everyone. Secular ethicists argue that morality is free from any source grounded in a particular religion or tradition. Similarly, postmodernists advocate values that are subjective to individuals. Both negations of values lead to the defeat of any meaning and purpose. In contrast, the Bible lays a clear foundation to help one to ground their morality (practice) and ethics (principles of the practice) formulated through divine revelation and human experience and response to that revelation through history.

The biblical narratives portray how the ethical principles are rooted in the nature and character of God: righteousness (sedek) that defines the objective moral codes on one hand, and mercy (chesed) of God that is redemptive action experienced by people. Justice and mercy of God come together in Christ, demonstrated in history that transpired in Christ's human experience. Love of God is the highest moral principle that construes value, meaning and purpose for human existence and activities in any given space and time. The moral choices we make as Christians are justified when it is perceived in the light of the righteousness and love of God as revealed through Christ. When one begins to utilise their time, money, resources, and activities in the light of divine righteousness and mercy as revealed through the Scripture, it adheres to the ethical mandate.



SETTING HIGHER STANDARDS OF ETHICAL

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Ethics is an integral part of Biblical Scripture. Christian ethics is defined as the way we conduct ourselves in the world. It is directed towards what is right and good in honouring God. In creation, God called all that He created 'good'. Hence, all the books in the Bible emphasise doing good and being good. Jesus was addressed as a good teacher by the Pharisees. His Sermon on the Mount is a classic example of Christian conduct and an ethical manifesto. Later apostles followed Jesus' model, teaching the church to conduct themselves as good Christians.

Apostle Paul instructs Titus, his spiritual son, in the common faith (Titus 1:4) regarding the Christian living. Titus is expected to teach and advise the churches at Crete to take on the Christian life seriously. More than doctrinal, we see a practical ethical dimension in this letter. The first-century Christians confronted ethical dilemmas in their commitment to follow Jesus Christ within a prevailing culture of pagan gods. The fundamental Christian doctrines challenged pagan religious practices. The Christians must maintain a standard above the Gentiles' existing standard. The letters of Paul can be seen as a motivation to show the moral superiority of Christian living against paganism. In the epistle to Titus, different categories of people in the church, specifically older men, older women, younger men and women, and servants, are cautioned to maintain their

behaviour. All these categories of people are asked to practice what they believe. Every culture has a particular way of conducting itself in society. For example, murder, robbery, etc., are commonly accepted as serious crimes in all generations. It is a punishable offence. No society advocates such practices.

Christians in Crete are advised to function above the expectations of society. What Jesus taught is significant for every believer to follow. "...do not resist an evil person, but whoever slaps on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let

limelight but also those members who play roles at different levels. Their life and conduct must be exemplary to others and at par with the Scripture. Paul instructs Titus to "set in order what remains" and "to appoint elders in every town" (Titus 1:5). Both actions contribute to the preservation of sound doctrine and to develop right conduct in the church, which is emphasised in the later passages.

The challenge Christianity faces today is the lack of understanding the significance of stewardship directed to God as heirs of eternal life. As citizens of heaven, how can we live in the earthly city influenced by worldly practices? The ethical

circle. Thus, through our behaviour, we preserve the revealed Word of God and glorify the name of Jesus Christ in our society and church.



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"The ethical behaviour of Christians is shaped by the influence of God's Word and the renewal of the Holy Spirit. We require supernatural help to sustain our behaviour and conduct as earthly beings."

him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two." (Mathew 5: 39-42). In Pauline's understanding, a Christian congregation is God's household. Throughout the letter, Paul wanted Titus to develop ethical Christian leadership capable of preserving the church's sound doctrine and right conduct at Crete. In addressing the above-mentioned five groups, Paul recognises that the church's leadership is not just those in the

behaviour of Christians is shaped by the influence of God's Word and the renewal of the Holy Spirit. We require supernatural help to sustain our behaviour and conduct as earthly beings. One should pray to God for the help of the Holy Spirit to get things right. Instead of just being spiritual in the church, one should look into own life to set a higher biblical standard that is evident to the people outside our

The purpose driven

christian lifestyle

"Christian morality is not to attain perfection or sainthood in human existence but is a missional enterprise with eternal value. Christians ought to discover the deeper meaning of their call to be a witness within any context through their Christian lifestyle without compromise"



We live in a world where human moral standards and ethics of social engagement are challenged by advocacy for the freedom of individuals to act. It is normal, perhaps fashionable, and progressive, to reject moral and ethical standards in human interactions. Restrictive boundaries and any standard of measuring good or bad are abhorred. Quite differently, the life experience unique to many Christians living in the Global South is their very act of social ethics being used to bring charges against them. In such contexts, Christian morality and ethical behaviour represent the Christian lifestyle. The very Christian lifestyle comes under attack when they are accused of: (i) practicing moral exclusivism with a claim to possess superior morality and ethical living, (ii) demonizing other religions and their ethical values, and (iii) often undertaking unethical practice of alluring non-Christians to embrace the Christian faith. The very act of charity in Christian love has been seen with suspicion as an evil practice of exploiting individuals' vulnerable conditions, like sickness, poverty, etc., for the propagation of religion. In this way, a biblically sound Christian lifestyle has often remained contentious and a reason for conflict with non-Christian cultural and religious worldviews.

What must Christians do, then? Is it a unique postmodern social phenomenon or does the Bible have lessons to teach us?

Apostle Peter's appeal to his audience living in many cities of Asia Minor (1 Peter 1:1) is to strategically practice their Christian ethics and moral instruction with an unflinching devotion to Christ (3:8-9). The reason is its temporal and eternal significance for Christian existence. The evangelistic works of Paul and several unnamed Christian missionaries in the region formed local communities of Christ-devotees. They lived in the seventh decade of the first century under Roman rule, which wielded its coercive authority over the political subjects. Under the eagle eye of Rome, Christians were viewed with suspicion as 'anti-nationals,' dangerous for society and empire, and hated for their self-isolation from social and religious functions and rites based on their newfound faith in Christ. They inevitably suffered persecution unjustly for the sake of Christ.

Within such a dynamic context, Peter encourages his audience to display a lifestyle modelled by Jesus and coherent with the goal of their call (3:8-9). Concerning their suffering, he reminds them that their trials are momentary (1 Peter 1:6). Peter helps them understand the reason and significance of their trials. He tells them their moral living and ethical engagements are strategic to the Christian mission. They need to understand the following important lessons for their Christian living in a complex cultural and political context.

1. Peter urges Christians to be holy in their lives, liberated from

their former ignorance (1:13-16) because they are ransomed by the blood of Jesus. The radical shift in their spiritual existence has initiated them into spiritual warfare against their souls. They must "abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against their soul" (2:11). The blessed life into which they are called in Christ Jesus must be lived in reverence to God (1:17-18). Thus, for a Christian, it is not a choice to accept or reject the moral and ethical standards set in Christ, but it is intrinsic to one's call and purpose of following Jesus.

2. Peter wants his audience to appreciate the strategic significance of Christians behaving honourably among non-Christians. For him, living in a hostile context, their moral uprightness and Christian ethical conduct have strategic value. Firstly, it can silence their accusers in the present (2:12) and, secondly, glorify God at Christ's return (2:15). Interestingly, Christians practicing such a sound biblical lifestyle within a marital context, for Peter, has missional significance. Peter's advice in 3:1-4 is least about prohibiting women from wearing ornaments but about bearing Christian witness to a non-Christian life partner in action. The principle of Peter's advice concerning Christian women is distinctly applicable to men also (3:7).

3. For Peter, the Christian response to unjust treatment by others is modelled after Christ's non-violent suffering with absolute trust in God. Ideally, Peter says,

none would harm you. Still, even if some violate an ideal situation, their fearless and undeterred practice of Christian morality and ethics will make them blessed (3:14). They ought to revere Christ as Lord in their hearts and be prepared to give the reason for their hope (3:15). It is their gracious suffering in the sight of God and the very purpose of their call (2:19-23). It is neither accidental nor strange but a reason to rejoice for future glorification (4:13-14).

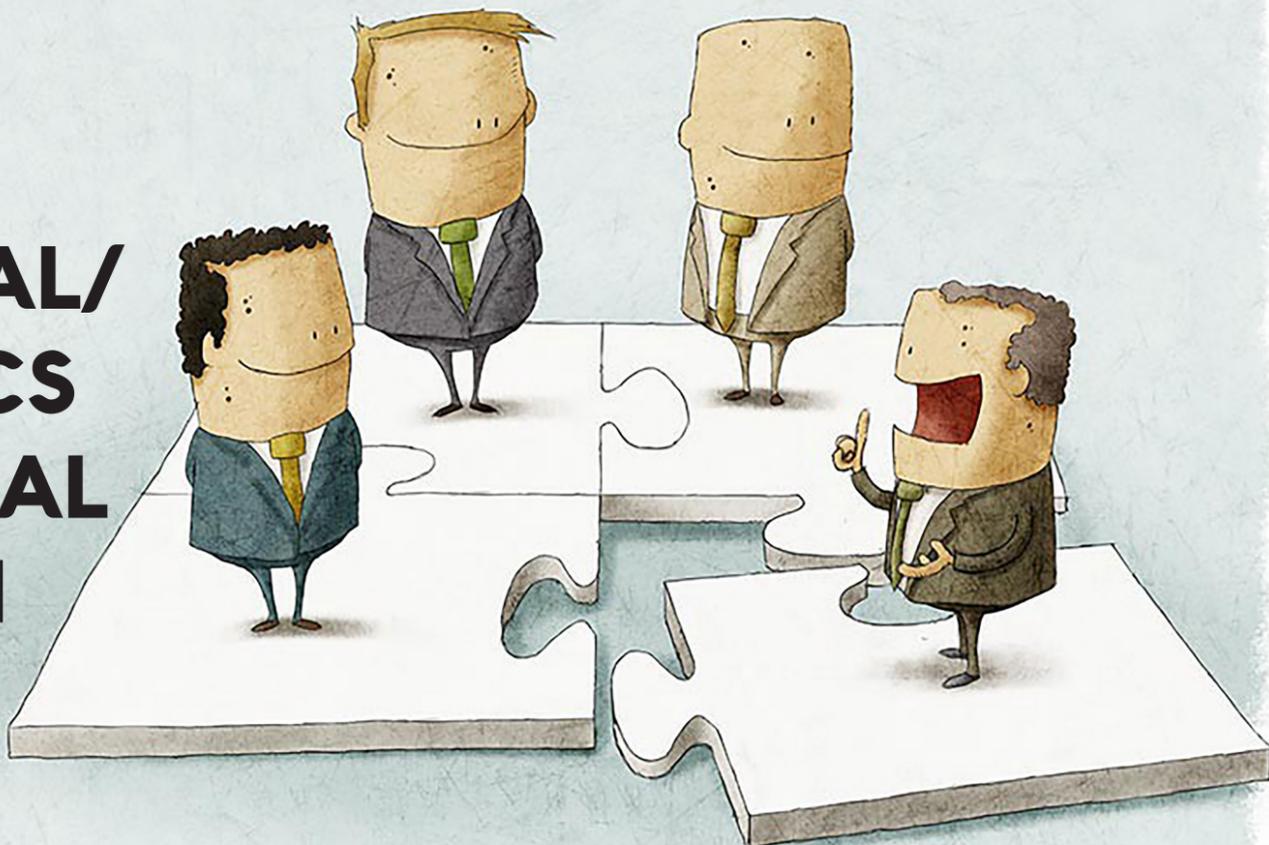
In short, Christian morality is not to attain perfection or sainthood in human existence but is a missional enterprise with eternal value. Christians ought to discover the deeper meaning of their call to be a witness within any context through their Christian lifestyle without compromise.



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PRACTICING PROFESSIONAL/PUBLIC ETHICS AND PERSONAL MORALITY IN UNISON



Today, the twin words, Ethics and Morality, are becoming a casualty with increasing frequency. This may be because they are perceived as public values (of course, they are). Upholding ethics and morality become a matter of presenting, protecting, and promoting one's public image. For instance, when politicians are accused of manipulating the electoral process, they take recourse to all measures at their disposal and whitewash their private frauds into public fairness despite their culpability; or, when religious leaders are accused of narcissism, nepotism, embezzlement or charged with acts of immorality, they rouse and rally their loyal followers to defend them. There is another pernicious public-private compartmentalization. For instance, a medical doctor or a celebrated author may maintain a high standard of professional ethics but may he/she may fail in personal morality. Let us imagine a case where a doctor refuses to charge an exorbitant fee or shuns organ trade to profit the organization, but he/she develops an extra marital affair with his/her colleague; in such a case, the public opinion may disapprove of the extra marital affair, but it will not publicly denounce the person because the doctor's professional ethic is intact and the morality is his/her issue.

In other words, practising ethics and morality as exclusive public virtues or bifurcating them in terms of public/professional-private affairs does not serve the purpose. In what follows, I will do a cursory reading of the Joseph narrative in Genesis 39 and suggest that an ideal way to promote the values of ethics and morality is to practise them in unison, not through a public-private bifurcation.

Uprooted from his secure family environment and shunted into an uncertain world, Joseph, a commodified item (a bought slave), eases himself into his work, displaying a high standard of professional ethics so much so that the master himself promotes him to be the de facto proprietor. Although the book of Genesis mentions precedence where a servant/slave (Eleazar) is proposed as the heir apparent (Gen 15: 2-3), there is a significant difference between both. As both narratives suggest, Eleazar seems to be part of Abraham's family for a long time and his becoming the heir apparent is a cultural necessity (in those days, a childless man may leave his property to his servant by will), whereas Joseph's public elevation seems to be a quick process and that, too, in a foreign land owing to his competence and ethics. One should not gloss over this factor for the overarching divine favour upon Joseph because the narrator's account of Potiphar not paying attention to anything in his household means that nothing can go wrong professionally no misgovernance, misappropriation with Joseph being in-charge. So, Joseph's professional skills and ethics, which won him plaudits, are in the public domain Potiphar's household includes all hired employees and bought slaves. Notably, this professional/public ethics seems to be a personal virtue, something that was ingrained in him even before he came to Egypt. To fulfil his father's mandate earlier, Joseph presses ahead to Dothan instead of returning from Shechem earlier, now landing up as a slave at Potiphar's house (Gen 37: 12ff.).

At no point does Joseph consider his

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"UNLESS WE RECKON ETHICS AND MORALITY TO BE DEEPLY PERSONAL VALUES THAT ARE FAITH-BASED AND GOD-ORIENTED AND THUS PRACTISE THEM IN UNISON, WE WILL USE THEM ONLY AS A FACADE FOR OUR ADVANCEMENTS, LIVING A DOUBLE-FACED LIFE, DEFEATING THEIR GOD-INTENDED PURPOSE- THAT THEY ARE MEANT TO MAKE GOD KNOWN IN AND THROUGH OUR LIVES"



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THE GOLDEN RULE OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

"AS THE CHILDREN OF GOD, LET OUR LIGHT SHINE
IN THE DARKNESS TO SPREAD LOVE, HAPPINESS,
AND PEACE AROUND US BECAUSE WE ARE CALLED
TO GLORIFY GOD THROUGH OUR VIRTUOUS DEEDS"

Ethics is a science of human behaviour, a system of moral principles that determines our actions. Our actions have consequences of either good or bad. It affects us and others who are part of our society. General ethics analyses a person's actions for the good of that person and the welfare of others. However, Christian ethics believes that the true nature and principles for authentic moral living are revealed in Jesus Christ. Our knowledge of the person and work of Jesus Christ sets the definite, absolute standard on which we base our ethics.

'Agape love' is the heart of Christian ethics. The supreme demonstration of this love is seen at the cross. "For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world, that He even gave His only begotten Son, so that whoever believes and trusts in Him as Saviour shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). God showed us His great love while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8). It is the standard for our love. God wants us to demonstrate such love to others. In Matthew 7:12, Jesus asks us to treat others the way we want them to treat us. We never wish for others to ill-treat us. Rather, we expect them to treat us with dignity and respect in every situation. By declaring this rule as the essence of the teachings of the Law and the prophets, Jesus affirms its significance in every Christian's life. This can be

considered the 'golden rule of the Christian life.' Multiple scripture verses emphatically convey the need to love each other. Jesus summarises the entire law in two sentences. Love your God and love your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40). It calls us to be other-centred, not self-centred. The privileges we enjoy (wealth, health, knowledge) are God's gifts. They are given to us so that we may bless others with those blessings and bring glory to our heavenly Father. In Luke 6:35 and Matthew 5:45, Jesus asks us to extend our love, forgiveness and helping hand even to our enemies because our God is kind, gracious, and good even to the ungrateful and the wicked. This idea is well explained in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Jews considered Samaritans as their rivals. When a Jewish man was robbed and left wounded on the roadside, his people did not try to rescue him. But a Samaritan showed compassion and rescued him from death. It teaches that a true neighbour helps in troubled times. Apostle John encourages us to 'unselfishly love and seek the best for one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves others is born of God and knows God' (1 John 4:7).

If everyone had followed the golden rule, the world would have been a beautiful place to live. Vices like cheating, violence, divorce, murder, war, or terrorism would not exist, and the world

would be filled with love, respect, and peace. Due to the fallen nature of this world, it is quite a dream! However, this ideal lifestyle will become a reality under the millennial reign of our Lord over all the earth (Isaiah 11). Let us eagerly and patiently await those glorious days. Meanwhile, as the children of God, let our light shine in the darkness to spread love, happiness, and peace around us because we are called to glorify God through our virtuous deeds.



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JOSEPH

- A MAN OF STEADFAST ETHICS & MORALITY

"The interesting thing about Joseph is that not once during his life did, he ever behave in a matter that jeopardized his faith or the sanctity of his virtues and principles."

From being sold into slavery by his brothers to becoming one of the most powerful men in Egypt, the story of Joseph's life is a beautiful story of redemption, acceptance, and forgiveness and how a little shepherd boy separated from his family became a powerful man without ever compromising his ethics or morals. Joseph was a man who was:

Tested by Temptation: When Joseph finds favor in Potiphar's eyes, he is assigned the task of managing his household. Working for Potiphar meant that Joseph had made it and that his days of suffering were possibly behind him. It also meant that Joseph was constantly in close contact with members of Potiphar's family. Soon enough, Potiphar's wife takes a liking to the well-built and handsome Joseph and pursues him in hopes of being in an intimate relationship with him. So when she gets an opportune moment, she makes her move. But Joseph does not give in to her immoral desires or yield to temptation. He is aware of his responsibilities to Potiphar, but more importantly, he is aware that this act would not be pleasing in the eyes of God.

Tested by Relationships: Being the second youngest of 13 children and the first child born to Jacob and Rachel, he was his father's favorite, a fact that did not sit well with his older siblings. So it is not surprising that they act on their jealousy. What is interesting, though, is that years later, when an older Joseph has the opportunity and the means to exact revenge on his brothers, he doesn't do it. Instead, he greets them with joy

and open arms. When Jacob dies, his brothers, who are still uneasy about what they have done to him, approach Joseph with trepidation, fearing the worst. Yet, once again, their fears were met with a grace they didn't expect, for Joseph tells them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:19-20 NIV).

Tested by Circumstances: Unfortunately for Joseph, Potiphar's wife retaliates and accuses him of trying to be intimate with her. An angry Potiphar puts him in prison, and Joseph finds himself in a terrible situation. However, as with other circumstances in Joseph's life, "the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him a favor" (Genesis 39:21 NIV). So even in prison, the Lord enables Joseph to be in a position of power.

Joseph's story leaves a powerful legacy of what it means to be true to your faith in all seasons of your life. His life was rife with suffering and disappointment. It seemed to be a series of unfortunate events that started at the age of seventeen and spanned 13 years. However, the interesting thing about Joseph is that not once during his life did, he ever behave in a matter that jeopardized his faith or the sanctity of his virtues and principles. This is precisely why God honors him and elevates his status in life.



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A NEW YEAR COMMITMENT

Christ's followers should be diligent in asking forgiveness and in offering forgiveness. "To be a Christian is to be forgiven."

As we are at the beginning of the New Year and about to make new commitments, I would like to share some thoughts with you all. Ephesians 4:32 reads, "Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

To be kind means to be compassionate, merciful, and selfless. It is easy to show kindness to people we love and care for. But the power of kindness is revealed when we show kindness to strangers or people whom we do not know. It is not that easy to forgive when someone hurts us. It feels natural to retaliate and keep some bitterness in our mind towards that person, at least for a while. Maybe that's why it's hard to forgive. But no matter what, God wants us to forgive and be kind to each other. The perfect example to look upon is Jesus Christ himself. His love towards humanity made Him lay down the heavenly glories and come into this world to sacrifice His life for mankind. When you respond tender heartedly with kindness and forgiveness, we show Christ's love to those around us. We see in the book of Acts how Stephen turns out to be a perfect example to the followers of Christ. When He was stoned to death by his accusers for spreading the Gospel, he was praying, "... Lord lay not this sin to their charge..." (Acts 7:60).

Showing kindness to others has multifaceted benefits. An act of kindness can bring comfort, peace, and encouragement to others. It will also allow the person who shows kindness to positively affect the body. Such an action stimulates the release of dopamine and serotonin (two chemicals in the brain that regulates mood and emotions) in our body. Serotonin helps regulate mood and sleep, while dopamine plays a vital role in the brain's enjoyment and gratification. Thus being kind to one another is beneficial to both parties.

In the Scriptures, forgiveness is a large multidimensional concept. Forgiveness is a state in which one's sin is no longer charged against him. The danger of punishment has been removed, and the person is no longer accountable for his sin. Freedom from the liability of guilt occurs as a result of forgiveness. Forgiveness has a cost to the one who grants it even if it is free to the one who receives it. God gave His only Son as atonement for the sins of mankind.

Christ's followers should be diligent in asking forgiveness and in offering forgiveness. "To be a Christian is to be forgiven. To live as a Christian is to forgive others... (Youssef, 2008)." When Jesus was scourged and crucified, His prayer was, "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do..." (Luke 23:34)." We should never

forget how God forgave us and should always be willing to forgive others.

This New Year, let us pray and make a new commitment: Gracious heavenly Father, help me be kind, tender hearted and forgiving to others. I want to be meek, loving and patient. It is my earnest desire to forgive others just like Christ forgave me. Help me to be obedient to you and your word. I need the help of the Holy Spirit in this area. Thank you for hearing my prayer. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Wishing you a very Happy New Year! May the God of hope fill your hearts with all joy, peace, and love.



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URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS IN ADULTS

- Fever, chills, malaise may be noted in bladder infection
- If someone experiences kidney infection, Pyelonephritis may present with the same symptoms as bladder infection in addition to fever, flank pain (where the kidneys are located), nausea/vomiting.
- Males may experience pelvic or perineal pain if they have prostate Infection.

These symptoms could represent other infections too, so if you experience these, please reach out to your healthcare provider. Delays in treating kidney infections can lead to serious complications.

How do we diagnose? A healthcare provider can diagnose UTI based on the person's symptoms. Females presenting with bladder infection symptoms without vaginal irritation or discharge are very likely to have a UTI. Urine analysis and or urine culture is done to confirm the infection. Urine culture tests allow us to try and grow bacteria in a laboratory setting. A urine culture can identify the bacteria causing the infection and determine which antibiotics are needed to fight against those bacteria. It will take almost 48 hours to get the culture results. Imaging studies are not usually needed unless the provider suspects blockage in the urinary tract or severe kidney infection.

What is the treatment for UTI? Antibiotics depending on the culture result if urine culture is done. You may feel better with 24-48 antibiotics. If not getting better in 2-3 days of starting antibiotics or your symptoms worsen, please contact your healthcare provider. Pain relief: You may need medications like Phenazopyridine for a couple of days to numb the bladder/urethra pain. This medicine is available as an over-the-counter medication. This medicine will change the urine colour to orange or red. -Some providers may encourage more fluid intake to flush the bacteria from the bladder.

Treatment for kidney infection: Antibiotics: Depending on the severity of the infection, IV or oral antibiotics will be given. Fever/ Pain relief: To reduce fever and pain, you may be asked to take over-the-counter Tylenol or Paracetamol or Ibuprofen-like medications, depending on the individual's medical condition. If the person is running a high fever, severe pain or experiencing nausea/vomiting may need to be admitted to the hospital for IV antibiotics and fluids. Most pregnant ladies with kidney infections are treated with IV antibiotics and fluids. If someone has recurrent bladder

infections, they may need further testing to find any abnormality in the kidneys, ureter, bladder or urethra or kidney stone causing the infection. Testing for the above conditions may include imaging studies like computed tomography (CT) scan, ultrasound, or cystoscopy to look into the bladder with a telescope-like instrument.

Females with recurrent bladder infections may need to look at the cause of infection to prevent them. Preventative measures such as taking cranberry products or D-Mannose supplements have been promoted to reduce frequent UTIs. Studies are not convincing about it (UpToDate, 2022). But it is not harmful. Increased fluid intake can help to prevent bladder infections. Don't wear tight jeans and nylon underwear, as they can trap moisture and create a perfect environment for bacterial growth. Urinating after intercourse might help to flush out germs that could get into the bladder. Post-menopausal women can benefit from vaginal estrogen applications to reduce infections. Don't hold urine for a long time and take time to empty the bladder. Wipe from front to back after using the toilet. Choose showers over baths. The kidneys' main function is to filter the blood and excrete waste products.

We are the handiwork of God. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. We can be in danger if we do not take care of our bodies. Suppose we input lots of nephrotoxic things into our bodies, it can damage our body's filtering system, and waste products will not be excreted through the urinary system well. It is important to be a good steward of our bodies. Same way, as children of God, if we do not filter what we input into our lives can damage our spiritual life and walk with God. We will have the spirit of discernment in our lives for physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Blessings.



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Urinary tract infections are common in females and report over 6 million visits to providers annually in the United States (Medscape, 2020).

Urinary tract infection (UTI) happens when bacteria get into the urethra and travels up into the bladder. The urinary tract includes the kidneys (which filter blood to produce urine), the ureters, the tubes that carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder (which stores urine) and the urethra. This tube carries urine from the bladder to the outside. If the urine infection stays in the bladder, it is called bladder infection or cystitis, and if it goes into the kidneys, it is called kidney infection or pyelonephritis. Bacteria that cause urine infection do not usually live in the bladder but in the gastrointestinal tract.

The following factors can cause an increased risk of UTIs (list not limited to the below risks): Diabetes or other conditions that suppress the immune system, bladder, or kidney infection in the past 12 months, Spermicide usage for birth control, uncircumcised male, conditions that block the urine flow, like kidney stones or urethral reflux, can predispose someone to UTIs. Some people are more likely to get this regardless of their behaviour or health conditions because of increased evidence of genetic predisposition.

What are the symptoms of UTI? If someone has a bladder infection, that person may present with:

- Burning or pain with urination
- Increased frequency and urgency of urination
- Blood in the urine
- Lower abdominal discomfort or suprapubic pain

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Christian Life: A Mandate to Live Out the Gospel

towards a radical transformation that engulfs every aspect of life - mundane, religious, and professional spheres. Such a life warrants an intentional commitment to conform our lives to the gospel.

The Graeco-Roman world was renowned for its vices and moral corruption inspired by religious and cultural conventions. Sexual taints of the mythological deities often trickled down to their human devotees, who, too, led immoral lives. Contra such a society, Paul urges a unique lifestyle for his community, distinguishing them amidst a corrupt and immoral society (Eph. 4:17-19). The lifestyle of Christians bears a louder witness than the oral proclamation of the gospel. Yet, this is an often-forgotten fact, Christians, especially the evangelicals, are eager to proclaim the gospel rather than live it out.

Apostle Paul understands a debased mind as the matrix for such a corrupt life (Eph. 4:17-19). Nigel Nicholson, a behavioural scientist, confirms the findings of evolutionary psychologists that "the mind is hardwired in ways that govern most human behaviour to this day." The futility of mind and darkened understanding motivated idolatry, impiety and wickedness in ancient societies (Rom 1:18-31). In his debate with Pharisees and Scribes, Jesus clarifies that what defiles a person matters from within (Mk. 7:21-23), i.e., evil intentions like fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly which flows from the mind. Little is different in modern societies.

The resolution is a distinctive life flourishing from a renewed mind. Paul recalls Ephesian Christians' encounter with Jesus (Eph. 4:20), followed by them being 'discipled' in the truth in Jesus and adhering to their ethical and moral responsibilities. A cognitive transformation is foundational for a changed lifestyle and spiritual growth, whether as an individual or a community. This 'Christo-centric' life forms a

new self, 'created in God's likeness (4:24), a unique identity.

Paul's call 'to put away your old self' and to 'clothe yourselves with the new self' signifies the transition to a new communal identity which distinguishes the Ephesian Christians from the larger society. They are now God's 'handiwork' (poiema) created in Christ Jesus for good works (Eph. 2:10). Just as a poem or an artwork demonstrates the craftsmanship and creativity of a poet or a sculptor, Christian communities are God's handiworks created in Christ, indebted to demonstrate the creator's skill, the magnificence of his craftsmanship. They accomplish the creator's purpose, practising good works as a way of life. The gospel-centric lifestyle of a community is the authentic demonstration of such good works. A community failing to live out its transformed lifestyle is stagnant and dead.

A pertinent question is what significance a community's transformed life brings to its Christian identity. Living out a 'gospel-centric' life fulfils several caveats.

- First, a gospel-centric life signals the community as the recipient of God's mercy that facilitates salvation (Eph. 2:4). The Ephesian Christians' former life was engrossed in 'trespasses and sins,' abhorrent to God. Yet despite their lack of worth, they are now beneficiaries of the bounties of God's mercy. Not merely in the present, as participants of God's redemption, they assume the demonstration of God's 'immeasurable riches' even in the age to come (2:7).
- Second, a transformed life witnesses the community's transition from death to life. The Ephesian community formerly lived under a two-pronged influence, 'the course of this world' and 'ruler of the power of the air,' which steered them to a sinful life, resulting in death (Eph. 2:1).

However, God's redemptive intervention inspired by his mercy invites them to a dramatic cross-over, from death to life. Such a shift is accomplished through the death and resurrection of God's Son. The cross remains not merely an instigating locus but rather a paradigm for conducting their mundane affairs. This cruciform life espouses attitudes and values characterising their identity.

- Third, a gospel-centric life signifies the community's participation in Christ's redemption. Their transition from death to life is accomplished by identifying with Christ in a threefold process initiated by God - 'being alive together with Christ,' 'being raised with him,' and 'being seated with him in the heavenly places' (Eph. 2:5-6). This threefold participation envisions sharing in Christ's life, glory, and heavenly fellowship.
- Fourth, living a Christian life affirms the community's salvation as God-initiated, Christ-accomplished and grace-facilitated (Eph. 2:5c, 8). Where human counsels and disciplines fail, God's redemptive initiative offers the impetus for a radical change, both in one's life and that of a community. The transformed lifestyle reminisces the work of divine grace and leaves no room for human boasting (2:9).
- Finally, living a godly life demonstrates the recognition of God's purpose for the community in its humble surrender as God's handiwork. Christ's followers can hardly shrug off their responsibility of imitating Christ. As individuals and communities, they are mandated to demonstrate the character of their creator. A gospel-centric lifestyle of a community distinguishes it from the larger society, bearing an effective witness than the oral proclamation of the gospel.

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Practicing Professional/Public Ethics and Personal Morality in Unison

professional ethics as a virtue for public consumption in Potiphar's house, and neither does he hide under its veneer. This is evident in the ensuing episode where Potiphar's wife offers him a young man's pleasure without risk. From her perspective, Joseph's consent to the private act of immorality will not tarnish Joseph's public image, neither will it interfere with his professional ethics nor diminish Joseph's power and acceptance. Simply put, the business will be as usual as earlier. Furthermore, Joseph's rationality may point to a safeguard of the opportunity wherein the risk factor of a public ignominy equally hangs on Potiphar's wife, and, if the worst comes her pregnancy

then it will pass off as a result of the legitimate union between her and her husband. However, as the narrator presents, Joseph resists this repeated offer staunchly because, for him, morality is not a matter of public perception but a personal, private conviction. Joseph refuses to play a dichotomous game of admired public-professional ethics and convenient private morality because his morality is grounded in a God-cantered, God-conscious, God-approved framework, not an opportunistic, image-driven agenda. Therefore, for Joseph, a physical liaison with Potiphar's wife is not a mere socio-moral offence that Pharaoh's court may pardon at a later stage Pharaoh's cupbearer, charged with

an offence, is released later but it is a sin against God whom Joseph cannot displease at any cost by engaging in it. As the story goes, Joseph pays a stupendous price for pleasing God privately: his public image is turned upside down from a respected public personality to a condemned criminal, a rape accused.

Unless we reckon ethics and morality to be deeply personal values that are faith-based and God-oriented and thus practise them in unison, we will use them only as a facade for our advancements, living a double-faced life, defeating their God-intended purpose that they are meant to make God known in and through our lives.



Kevin McCarthy was elected the US House Speaker

After heated exchanges, Kevin McCarthy was elected Speaker of the US House of Representatives, which almost saw fellow Republicans come to blows. It took 15 rounds of voting for Mr McCarthy to win the job, despite his party having a majority in the chamber. It came after a dramatic pressure campaign played live on the House floor as party rebel Matt Gaetz was urged to vote for Mr McCarthy. The Florida Congressman was among six holdouts who relented late on Friday. Earlier, amid heated scenes in the chamber, Mr Gaetz had almost come to blows with Rep Mike Rogers - a supporter of Mr McCarthy. The Alabama congressman had to be physically restrained by colleagues as he bellowed and jabbed his finger at Mr Gaetz. The Speaker sets the House agenda and oversees the legislative business. The post is second in line to the presidency after the US vice-president.

After his confirmation, Mr McCarthy wrote on Twitter: "I hope one thing is clear after this week: I will never give up. And I will never give up on you, the American people." Mr McCarthy told reporters that former President Trump had helped him get the final votes: "I don't think anybody should doubt his influence". "He was with me from the beginning... he would call me and call others," he said.

US President Joe Biden congratulated Mr McCarthy for his win and said he looked forward to cooperating with the Republican Party.

Global markets struggle to put last year's misery behind them



European and Asian stocks pushed higher on the first significant trading day of 2023 as investors tried to look beyond a gloomy outlook for the world economy, China's worst Covid outbreak and stubbornly high inflation in Europe. But after a positive start, Wall Street succumbed to fear again. US stocks opened higher, but the rally was short-lived. The Dow ended the day with a

loss of about 13 points, essentially unchanged. The S&P 500 fell 0.4%, while the Nasdaq Composite was down 0.8%. Stocks did close well off their lows earlier in the session, though.

Investors in Europe were buoyed by survey data released on 9th December, showing that supply chain and inflation pressures were easing slightly for manufacturers in the economies that use the euro currency. Investors spent 2022 on a rollercoaster, with \$33 trillion wiped off global equity markets. Many suffered deep losses last year as central banks hiked interest rates at an unprecedented clip in a bid to control surging inflation.

"Almost everyone is going into 2023 with a healthy dose of trepidation," Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at Oanda, said. Investors can expect the world's central banks to continue hiking interest rates to tame historic inflation levels, despite signs that price rises globally have started to cool, partly due to a drop in energy prices.

World News



400-year-old Bible to be sold at auction in Belfast

A 400-year-old Bible taken to the New World by the founder of a town in Massachusetts is set to go under the hammer in east Belfast. The copy of the Geneva Bible is valued at between USD 6,000 and USD 12,000 by Bloomfield Auctions. It was printed in 1615 and taken to the United States in 1633 by Elizabeth Pole. The Geneva Bible was the first mechanically printed, mass-produced Bible available to the public. It was first published in 1560 - half a century before the King James Bible. The current owner Elizabeth Pole was originally from Devon, UK, when she went on to found the town of Taunton in Massachusetts and is believed to be the first woman to establish a town in North America. Robert Baker printed a copy for Queen Elizabeth I and kings James I and VI.



Mass arrests in Brazil after supporters of Ex-president Bolsonaro storm Congress

About 1,500 people have been held in Brazil after supporters of ex-President Jair Bolsonaro stormed Congress, the presidential palace and the Supreme Court in the capital Brasília. The rioting came a week after President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was sworn in. He condemned the "terrorist acts" and vowed to punish the perpetrators. Mr Bolsonaro has not admitted defeat in October's tight election that divided the nation and flew to the US before the handover on 1 January. On Monday, 9th Jan, he was admitted to a hospital in Florida with abdominal pain. The new president - widely known as Lula - and the heads of Congress and the Supreme Court said they "reject the terrorist acts and criminal, coup-mongering vandalism that occurred" during Sunday's riots. The dramatic scenes saw thousands of protesters clad in yellow Brazil football shirts, and flags overrun police and ransack the heart of the Brazilian state. Lula was forced to declare emergency powers.



COVID-19 travel advisory: Negative RT-PCR reports now required to arrive in India from specific countries

India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare issued the latest COVID-19 travel guidelines. All international arrivals from China, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Thailand and Japan will now have to produce a negative RT-PCR report from a test conducted 72 hours before the actual journey. For all passengers flying in from these six countries, there's a mandatory requirement for pre-departure RT-PCR testing, conducted 72 hours before boarding the flight.

This rule also applies to all transiting passengers, irrespective of their origin, through these six countries. This is for entry to all Indian airports. Also, the Ministry of Civil Aviation's Air Suvidha portal is made operational for international passengers arriving in India from the six countries with a provision to allow submission of a negative RT-PCR test report along with a self-declaration form. Post-arrival random testing of 2 per cent of travellers, irrespective of their port of departure, will continue. Several international passengers arriving in India have tested positive for COVID-19. The new travel guidelines have been implemented since January 1, 2023.

'Once in a century' flood cuts off communities in north western Australia

SYDNEY -Military helicopters airlifted hundreds of people from communities cut off by "once in a century" floods in Australia's northwest, an official leading relief effort said on Sunday, noting water covered some places "as far as the eye could see". The crisis in the Kimberley - a sparsely populated area in Western Australia state about the size of California - was sparked last week by severe weather system Ellie, a former tropical cyclone that brought heavy rain. "The water is everywhere," Western Australia Emergency Services Minister Stephen Dawson told reporters in Perth. "People in the Kimberley are experiencing a one-in-100-year flood event, the worst flooding Western Australia has had in its history."

In some parts, he said flood waters stretched for 50 kilometres with inundation "as far as the eye can see". The emergency comes after frequent flooding in Australia's east over the last two years due to a multi-year La Nina weather event. Some eastern regions have endured four major flood crises since last year caused by the La Nina system, which is typically associated with increased rainfall. The town of Fitzroy Crossing, a community of around 1,300 people, has been among the worst hit, with supplies having to be airlifted in due to flooded roads. Across the Kimberley, where around 50% of residents are Aboriginal, 233 people had so far been evacuated due to flooding, authorities said. The Bureau of Meteorology said on Sunday that rain had eased as the storm shifted eastwards to the Northern Territory but warned that "record-breaking major flooding" continued in the Kimberley.

Australian Defence Force (ADF) aircraft were being used to assist flood-hit communities, and Chinook helicopters were en-route to help relocate residents, according to authorities on Saturday. Five ADF helicopters will start operations in the Kimberley by Thursday, a defence spokesperson said.



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