

*FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS*  
Studies In Bible Doctrine

by

Mark Bullen

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## INTRODUCTION

Repetition is the key to learning. There are some important issues in the first seven books that will not be covered in book 8, but are still our position and standard. Just as all five books of Moses composed the Law, and all the books of the New Testament composed the New Covenant; so all of our books and sermons compose our standard -- we are simply teaching the New Testament and applying it to our lives. This is not a law, but a vision. This is not meant to overwhelm the convert, but to give him a target to shoot for. We will not wait until you have mastered this to consider you a member, but until you have embraced it. We just want you to know up front how we see God's will, and be sure you want the same thing we do.

Let it be known that we are not adding to Scripture, but rightly dividing it. If we believed there was a better way to serve the Lord, and apply Scripture, we would not have written this, but something else. If we see more light, then we will adjust. Only the principles are eternal, not our applications. We humbly ask you to enlighten us if you know a better way to pursue, and can convince us from the Scriptures in their historic use and context.

## CHAPTER 1 - PLEASED, BUT NEVER SATISFIED

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."  
Matt. 5:48

A great danger in setting down standards and rules of conduct for a church group is that usually these standards simply regulate the outside of a person, but never touch the heart. Because of this, people who are not spiritually minded rest within the walls of the church standard with all their "exteriors" in place, but without a living, Christ seeking faith. This produces a false security and sense of "arrival", which then produces spiritual passivity, lethargy, pride, and a dull conscience. The answer is not to throw away standards, but to watch for spiritually dull members and warn them of being such. If you are doing something just because the preacher says so, and not because you have it as your own conviction; the cure is not to **stop** what you are doing, but find out if it is Biblical and make it your own conviction.

People who fall in this trap seem to think that as long as "it" is absent from the church standard's list of do's and don'ts, "it" is acceptable to Christ also. This leads to the idea that "**It** is wrong for me, because my church says, 'No'; but **it** is right for him, because his church says, 'Yes!'" Then if I go to his church, **it** will then please Jesus for me to do **it** also, even though I have been taught better.

Now, this scenario can be right at times, and on issues that are really not moral issues, but "preferences" decided on by the church leaders. The principle then that makes "it" displease Christ in one situation, but please him in another is not the "**it**"; **but whether or not you are submitting to God ordained authority**. Hebrews 13:7,17 are commands of God also; and we need to give church leaders freedom to apply principles and define terms for the perfecting of the saints and the edifying of the body of Christ.

Living after the flesh is wrong for you no matter what the church says is permitted. Disobeying Scripture is also wrong for your friend or family; even though the practice is not condemned by their church. If they have received greater light and better teaching, but are hiding behind the standards of a liberal church, they are still rebelling against Christ, and should be warned and rebuked. Hiding behind the accepted standards of a group, while your heart is cold and hypocritical is the sin of the Pharisees. Jesus said,

**"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:20**

Carnal satisfaction with outward uniformity and order, while unconcerned about spiritual temperature or doctrinal accuracy is the sin of the Judaizers (and many "ism" supporters today) whom Paul warned about in Galatians 6:12-14:

**"As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."**

The standards Jesus set were basically "Spiritual Goals" that would take a lifetime of striving to master, if even then. They were basically "unreachable", but their practical applications were "practicable". You cannot attain to humility, but you can practice acts of humility in the effort of attaining to humility. You will never arrive at "loving your enemies", but you can practice turning the other cheek, and doing acts of kindness to your enemies. Jesus definitely expected us to obey the practical applications, but always attached them to a "spiritual goal" which we can never fully conquer.

This mixture of practical application attached to unreachable spiritual goals and ideals succeeds in not only regulating the outside, but in regulating also the heart! "Thou shalt not" leaves too much space; but "Be thou perfect" leaves nothing out. There is obviously no need to fast and pray to fulfill most "church standards"; but if we are to be true followers of Christ, we will have to cry out to God for the power of the Holy Spirit, and cling to the cross to succeed.

Many who obey church standards, but don't know the principle behind the standard, also don't apply it in any other area of life that the standard forgot to mention. This is because it was not attached to a spiritual principle, goal, or ideal that they are accountable for. The standard shouldn't be an "end", but only a "means" to help us attain to the "end" of spiritual maturity.

**"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."  
Heb. 13:7**

Why can't we just say to people, "Be thou perfect"? Because some have not the maturity to make proper application to everyday life. Most people's point of reference in determining "biblical" or "godly" is 21st century American churchianity, not 1st century apostolic Christianity. Leaders are to be those whose senses are exercised to discern both good and evil, and thus teach us to observe and apply spiritual principles. Churches who just say, "Be thou perfect", and then let come what may, have shown themselves a shameful testimony for Christ. Having everyone in the church on their own timetable of when they obey specific standards of the church deletes the principle of ministers "teaching them to observe" and followers "obeying them that have the rule over you". Insisting on waiting until "I am convicted about it" is simple rebellion to the Scriptural principle of the younger submitting unto the elder -- you need to get convicted about that.

Actually, every sermon the pastor preaches comprises the church's standard, because it brings more truth and light that we are accountable for. Preaching that is vague and only touches on theory, but lacks practical application, is not Bible preaching. The apostles, who were sent to "teach them to observe all things" made many practical applications, which were attached to spiritual goals -- read the New Testament.

**"...that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."  
Acts 26:20**

**"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." 1  
Tim. 2:9,10**

When Paul told men to repent and turn to God, he then had to make practical application in "works meet for repentance". When Paul told women to be modest, sober, shamefaced, and godly; he had to make sure they understood that meant they were to be modest, without hairdos, without jewelry, and without costly or fancy clothes. Timothy, the local pastor, then had to teach them what was and wasn't fancy clothes, acceptable modesty, etc. People who are spiritually immature couldn't make the proper applications then, and can't now. John the Baptist said, "prepare the way of the LORD, make his paths straight";

but read in Luke all the practical applications he added to this spiritual goal. You can make this a Bible study of your own, to see all the spiritual goals attached to practical applications within the command of "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God...And love thy neighbor as thyself".

We will never master "Loving the Lord with all our heart, and loving our neighbor as our self"; but if we obey God's Word diligently in all the practical applications, we will learn and grow in meeting those all encompassing spiritual goals. If we aren't doers of all the Word of God from our hearts, we will deceive ourselves into thinking we are loving the Lord, and loving our neighbor, when we are actually working for the devil. Notice the degeneration in the 3 passages:

**"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:2,3**

#### **PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF TERMS**

**"But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." James 1:22**

#### **THE LOSS OF PROPER UNDERSTANDING**

**"Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John 16:2**

#### **THE FRUIT OF IMPROPER UNDERSTANDING**

Saving faith requires us to walk in all the light we have, not settle for the church standard or spiritual level of the church. Your accountability before God grows every time you receive more light; thus you can never rest on a list of standards. That is what the Jews mistakenly did with the Law of Moses. The Law was only meant to be a guide while they sought the Lord with all their hearts, and thus showed their faith. The Old Testament saints were to show their faith by diligently striving to obey the Law for God's glory; and we are to diligently obey the New Testament to show our faith in Christ. They couldn't atone for their sins by keeping the Law, and we can't by obeying the New Testament; but Jesus won't apply his atoning blood to our record if we are not found diligently obeying and following (1 John 1:7-2:5). Being carnal while resting just within the letter of the Law does not show faith, and will not find grace in the eyes of the Lord.

The OT Jews were expected to live in the Spirit of the Law by faith in God; and we today are to walk in the Spirit of Christ's teachings by faith. Nobody can be saved by resting in the letter alone of God's Word, but must live in the spirit of God's Word.

### RECEIVE AS CHRIST RECEIVES

"Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God" Rom. 15:7

How sad and unbiblical it is for a church to reject someone from communion because they don't fit some tradition that is not even based on the Word of God; and then at the same time admit that the person they won't receive is a good Christian--maybe more accurate in doctrine or practice than the church.

When dealing with receiving or not receiving people into communion, we must follow the Word of God to know whether Christ will or will not receive certain people. We must not receive a person into membership unless Christ receives them, and we must receive those whom Christ receives. Some would try to jump on this to excuse their loose and unbiblical standards, saying, "Christ receives sinners right where they are". Yes. but Christ ONLY receives repentant sinners, who are willing to be disciplined and taught to observe all things he commanded by his chosen leaders. The great commission included "teaching them to observe", remember. On the day of Pentecost, Peter told them to repent and be baptized, but he didn't stop there. The Bible tells us: "with many other words" he told them to "save themselves from this untoward generation"; that those who "*gladly* received his word" were baptized; and those baptized, "*continued* in the apostle's doctrine". Later, when they sent out the "decrees for the keep" (Acts 16), church leaders added these decrees to their standards. New members now had to obey these new standards also. Even though some were accepted members days before without these new standards, now they weren't, if they didn't submit. Jesus doesn't receive those who won't submit to godly leadership and be taught. Jesus only receives those who are walking in the light they have, and willing to receive more.

Those whom Jesus receives, we receive to the glory of God. Those whom Jesus would not receive, we will not receive. Some hard cases take time to discern for sure, but we have to take people at their word to some degree. Philip took Simon at face value; and Simon later proved insincere, but that is bound to happen. It is better to bring in one who appears sincere; than keep them out and treat them as liars

until they convince us for six months or a year that they want to follow Jesus too. The church cannot become man's club, but must remain Christ's church. Jesus sets the entrance requirements. Many Churches today have become nothing but social clubs for the elite with worldly wise men setting the entrance requirements. We have no right to alter the apostolic design. Through weekly communion, and the dynamics of such, we allow Christ to judge and purge His church His way.

## CHAPTER 2 - FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS

**"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:" Eph. 4:11-15**

This is the goal and aim! This focuses on what Jesus desired to accomplish in the church. Is this *your* desire? Do *you* want the ministers in the church to perfect you? Do you want to grow in the unity of the faith? Do you want to become a perfect man according to the measure of the stature of Christ? If not, then you are not ready to be a Christian, a member of a Biblical church, or a follower of Jesus. Are you teachable? Are you willing to be **perfected** by those who are more mature than you? This takes great humility and true living faith in Christ -- the Christ who set up the program, and gave the spiritual gifts to the respective ministers.

This passage of Scripture sums up my desire as a minister of Jesus Christ -- to be faithful to fulfill my job description. This church standard is based on this motive alone. A true minister of Christ who can be shown Scripturally that they are wrong on a subject, will gladly change -- this is my heart also. I don't claim to have arrived, and I need the brethren in the church to perfect me also. NOTICE JESUS DID NOT SAY WE COULD PERFECT OURSELVES WITHOUT THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH SCRIPTURAL MINISTERS WORKING IN A SCRIPTURAL CHURCH -- It is all too easy to think you are perfect when by yourself without the scrutiny of godly brethren, and the need for submission, forbearance, etc.

## I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK

**"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." Phil. 3:14-17**

It is very important that you grasp a few simple concepts from this passage. Paul wanted all those who were mature believers (perfect) to be "thus minded", i.e. "striving for greater perfection", and not feeling they had arrived. Nevertheless, Paul says, "whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule,". What does this mean? This means we ought to be striving to grow to new heights of understanding and maturity; but at the same time, we ought not to be divided on the fundamentals of holiness and sound doctrine that have already been established. The decision of the apostles at the council in Jerusalem didn't need to be reconsidered. The instruction the apostles had already given and the standards already set forth should stay intact while they were going higher in Christian character. In other words: **STANDARDS ARE MEANT TO BE A FLOOR, BUT NOT A CEILING.** They keep us from going backwards, but not forwards. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. If it was right for the women to wear a veil in the first century, then it is right today! If it was wrong for a man to have long hair in Paul's teaching, then it is wrong today. If we reconsider these standards and teachings, we are not going forward, but backwards. Growing in grace **NEVER** destroys Bible principles of holiness and godliness (the floor); but only builds higher disciplines of mind and body in the individual. Modern day church leaders are not apostles, and improvements can be made in some of their applications. This should only be done by spiritual leaders for the purpose of being more apostolic and pleasing to Christ. Being more spiritual never takes us closer to the world's ways and values; but lifts us higher into Christ's ways and values.

Everything the apostles wrote to the churches were to be obeyed -- they were a standard: either something they could not do, or something they must strive for. The only requirement to reach scriptural standards is a **willing heart** -- God's commandments are not grievous to spiritual people.

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." 2 Cor. 8:12

### CHAPTER 3 - STATEMENT OF FAITH AND PRACTICE

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." 11 Tim. 2:2

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3

Faithful men are those who will receive truth, keep it unchanged, and pass it on in its purity. We are to contend only for The Faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Thus we trace our spiritual heritage through those men who were faithful to pass on The Faith, which was once delivered unto the saints. Since Paul told us to follow him, and use him as a ruler to measure other teachers, (basically using the apostles and the apostolic churches as a ruler to measure truth and error), this we do throughout church history.

We can historically follow faithful groups of believers up to our day who suffered greatly for the true faith, and never associated with the apostate Roman or Protestant churches. These people were called by many different names usually based on where they lived, or who their pastor was at the time. The name "Anabaptist" was fairly common to all those who didn't accept the marriage of church and state and the accompanying infant baptism. We consider their progress in the faith, and many standards they set as worthy of our respect and attention; lest we think we are more spiritually mature than those who suffered the loss of all things for Jesus Christ.

We hold to the New Testament as the last will and testament of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Law of Christ, the New Covenant, and our sole authority for faith and practice. We appreciate the Schleitheim Confession of the Swiss Anabaptists of 1527, and the Dortrecht Confession of the Anabaptists of 1632. These confessions can be found in the Mennonite Confession of Faith, published by Rod and Staff Publishers. We also appreciate many other writings from the Anabaptists (also called Baptists and Mennonites during the reformation, but not necessarily the same as those called that today).

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There are many valuable writings from the early Christians that are helps to us as well.

Since the early Christians were not so concerned about theological theories, but in "how you lived"; we also are more concerned about following Jesus than in theorizing about him. Our major concern will focus on being "doers of the Word".

**The primary message of our standard is that we should strive for holiness as defined and agreed upon by the consensus of the brethren under the leadership of the bishop and elders (Acts 15). Here is where practical unity and submission to the body really comes into play. The Bible pattern is that believers are accountable to the teachings (traditions) given by the consensus of godly church leaders. In Heaven there will be no individualism, but we will all ebb and flow with the will of God. If you can't lose your self-will here, you may not make it there.**

We believe and practice a Biblical church government, with a bishop and Deacons/elders as administrators (Acts 21:18) who meet Bible qualifications (I Tim. 3 & Titus 1,2). We believe these men should be honored and obeyed (Heb. 13:7,17; I Thess. 5:12,13; I Tim. 5:17). We believe they that preach the gospel have right to live of the gospel; but they may choose to support themselves. All authority is subject to the Scriptures and God's authority.

### **CHRISTIAN HOME**

The Christian home should be modest, simple, godly, and a ministry station. Jesus must be Lord in every aspect. The ungodly influences of TV, radio, internet, magazines, worldly books and cassettes, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and unbiblical religious material (and if there be any other thing contrary to sound doctrine and holiness) should be kept out of the home, and away from the children's reach. Internet usage for business is cautiously allowed as long as no harmful affects to the church body are detected from it. Parents should act as a filter to keep Satan's influences away from themselves, and the children. Children should not be taken to homes, stores, etc. where they will have their minds corrupted, and parents should avoid the same corrupting influences as much as possible.

Modesty should be practiced within the home as well as without. Children should be taught godly obedience with the Scriptural use of the rod of correction. Children should not be taught materialism by

having excessive toys or worldly toys. Christians should separate from the world's fairs, amusement parks, rodeos, sports, games, etc. where humanism, ungodly music, nakedness, materialism, vain competition, alcoholic drink, etc. are propagated.

The Christian home will not seek after the pleasures and vanities of worldly holidays, even if they take on a religious tone, such as Christmas, Easter, etc. Worldly music should be avoided.

We believe it is wrong for children to attend public schools and liberal church schools. Home schooling is a great blessing, and trades can be learned from the home or Christian brethren.

We believe in godly hands-off courtship. The place for courtship is in family activities, where parents can learn to know the parties, and give council. One should not enter into courtship until old enough to marry. Courtship with the unsaved is unscriptural. Weddings and funerals should be kept simple and spiritual, without costly array and vain display.

Christians must always go directly to the brother/sister they have a problem with in a spirit of love and reconciliation, not criticize to others and sow discord -- this is something the Lord hates (Prov. 6:14,19). When brethren and sisters share what they know about other brothers or sisters in the church with new converts, visitors, or one another, they sow discord and hurt what good influence the slandered brother may have had on the person they gossiped to. This is the work of Satan.

## **BROTHERS**

Men are to strive to be spiritually minded; seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; not effeminate; men of prayer; faithful contenders for the faith; loving their wives; bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; displaying the fruit of the Spirit; not speaking evil of others; submitting to government; paying taxes; honestly providing for their own household; submitting to godly church leadership and brethren; supporting the church; helping the poor; etc. Is there any end? No, it is a lifetime of studying and applying Scripture.

Men are to dress in simple, plain clothes that fit loosely, and cover the body. Short sleeves, where the sleeve comes nearly to the elbow is acceptable for work, but long sleeves are preferred for church

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meetings. Form fitting jeans, shorts, sweats, t-shirts, and knit shirts are not modest. Men should avoid bright showing colors, fancy sunglasses, unbuttoned shirts (more than one button), and a "macho" image. Men should be careful not to defraud others by their dress. Hair should not be styled in a worldly manner. Clothes that associate with worldly trends, sports, etc. should be avoided. Men should seek to control their tongues, emotions, and attitudes by bringing every thought to the obedience of Christ. They should avoid excessive "teasing" and joking among brothers, and should avoid it altogether with the sisters. No jewelry or costly array of any kind is to be worn (including costly, showy watches). Beards are seen as God's will for manly sex distinction.

We are to lay up treasure in Heaven, and not on earth. Our possessions (house, car, tools, etc) should be purchased with godly stewardship and are to be tools to build God's Kingdom, not toys to fulfill the lust of the flesh. Houses and cars should be kept simple, without vain decor, and the show of pride or vanity. We are to strive to display humility, showing that we are pilgrims seeking for a better country. We suggest the homes to have Scripture verses displayed on the walls in various ways, rather than vain and costly decor. We should avoid the show of pride in displaying self-glorifying photos of ourselves on our walls, buying costly furnishings, extravagant architecture and landscape, etc.

Fathers should lead their homes spiritually with Bible devotions and prayer. Men should strive to set the example of loving enemies, turning the other cheek, going the second mile, and doing unto others what we would have done to us. We believe God calls men and gifts men to build the church according to their spiritual gifts. We encourage the brothers to aspire to spiritual maturity and to fulfill their callings under the counsel of the brotherhood and ordination of the elders. We believe it is Scriptural for all God called and qualified men, who have first been proved, to be ordained to preach in evangelistic efforts, Bible studies, and in the local assembly according to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

### **SISTERS**

Wives are to be holy women, submissive to their own husbands; willing to serve their families in love; standing with the husband in child discipline; not speaking evil of their husband or others; happy to be keepers at home; good stewards of time and money; showing forth the fruit of the Spirit; seeking to help the poor, widows, and other sisters;

faithful to witness for Christ; hospitable; chaste; soberminded; and loving the Lord Jesus with all their heart.

Our goal is to be "at least" as modest as what Paul expected in his day. Paul considered a woman modest, who wore a plain dress (like the stola of the day without ornaments), with a katastole (like a vest), with a humble-shy spirit (shamefaced), without sensual appeal (chaste), with a veil, and a serious walk with God (sobriety).

We are striving to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works and perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Life in a true church is not understood by the carnal. Ladies in our society have much to change to get in line with apostolic Christianity, and may be tempted to stop short of victory by comparing themselves with modern standards, or following their feelings. Ladies, please beware having a grumbling, murmuring spirit if your husband leads your family this way - this is very grievous to God's Spirit (I Cor. 10:10). Diligently resist this "missing the leeks and garlics of Egypt" attitude - it is poison to the youth especially. Discontent wives are poison to their husband's spiritual fervor. People who come out of our affluent society to a plain, humble walk of life, are not having to be as radical as the Jews who became Christians, Romans who became Christians, Catholics who became Ana-baptists, Communists or Islamics turned Christians in the past or today. God forbid that we should murmur about our lessor crucifixion of the earthly affections and lusts. We are teaching nothing new - such standards are common throughout the history of God's people.

Primarily we ask the fathers and husbands to police the dress in their home, and determine what is most practical and useful within the bounds of godliness. We ministers will approach the fathers and husbands if we see a problem. We hope that you will determine in your heart to be humble and cooperative should this arise - Ultimately God will hold the bishops responsible for the church and expects them to keep it in order. This is God's way, not man's. We would only be concerned if we saw something we considered "leaven" and dangerous to the whole body if continued. PLEASE COMMUNICATE IF THERE IS A PROBLEM - DON'T ASSUME WE WILL BE UNCOOPERATIVE.

The following is what the bishop believes to be a safe and wise course, and what he teaches his family. In a close working fellowship, extra carefulness is in order, especially to protect the purity of our youth.

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We encourage our fathers to seek God for the leadership of their own homes.

I recommend the sister's dress is to follow the pattern of the "modest Katastole", with a long (at least to mid-calf), full (loose), plain dress (or skirt/blouse) and a loose vest, smock or apron, which provides the "double covering" over the bodice and avoids the "drawn in" waistline.

This keeps the clothes from being tight on the parts of the body which need to be concealed, not accentuated. This type of dress is described in "Teaching Them to Observe" - book 7. Modest "jumpers" are good for little girls, but usually are not very modest on mature ladies.

I recommend Sleeves should be at least to the elbow and loose fitting; but drawn in at the cuff to avoid immodesty. No lace, ruffles, ribbons, or fancy collars. Dresses should have a simple collar to avoid too large neck openings. As already stated in book #7, we encourage our ladies to make their clothes when possible, rather than buy them. It will be rare that clothes purchased will be a safe pattern or meet the criteria herein. **Snug clothes are not modest.**

No jewelry or costly array of any type is to be worn. Plain, solid, opaque fabric is a safe choice for the dresses. Prints should be used with great caution. **Simple, subdued, humble, modest, and not too "busy"** printed fabric can be practical to hide stains; but others can become a form of ornamentation - it should be chosen with mortified earthly affections. The mother who desires to "dress up" herself or vainly dresses up her little girl for show is not following Jesus with a single motive and pure heart.

Fabric should not cling to the form, but have some "stiffness" or "body" of its own. Slips should be worn under dresses to protect when standing by a glass door or with light behind you. Bright and contrasting colors are not modest (humble and shamefaced), nor are rich colors of royalty, such as most shades of purple or red. We encourage simple colors that won't stand out in a crowd. Shoes should be simple and plain. No sheer hose is allowed, but opaque socks or hose to be worn in church meetings. No make-up or perfumes should be used, nor any other device for drawing attention to one's self. Sobriety, shamefacedness, a meek and quiet spirit, and chastity is God's idea of beauty. This spirit of modesty should prevail throughout the sister's activities, thus prohibiting participation in sports, entertainment, jesting, flirting, etc.

The head should be veiled with a hanging veil of plain solid material (no prints); that covers the hair (if you choose to wear your hair down) and the back of the neck (if you wear it up in a "bun"), according to the practice of the early church and the Greek word for covering, Katakalypto.

## **YOUTH**

The youth should be striving to attain to adulthood and flee youthful lusts which war against their soul. They are to obey and honor their parents and church leaders for the Lord's glory and testimony. The Bible says the youth are to be sober, grave, temperate, and an example of the believer in word, conduct, charity, spirit, faith, and purity. They should not be led to seek after vanities, as the world seeks after, such as sporty cars, fancy crafts, performing with musical instruments, hunting trophies, sports, etc. (Parents should set the example). Youth should seek to learn trades and skills to produce successful homes, godly churches, and build the kingdom of God by winning the lost. Youth should not have activities without adult supervision.

Young ladies should learn chastity, sobriety, and shamefacedness from the elder sisters. This means they won't be playing sports with the men, etc. Children should reflect the modest standards and life of their parents. Young girls should wear pantaloons or bloomers under their dresses for modesty while playing.

## **CONCLUSION**

This standard is simply a summary of Bible standards with applications. It is not exhaustive, nor takes a place of any authority over Scripture, thus not relieving anyone from principles of the Word of God not mentioned here or in the previous books. These practical applications and spiritual goals are set before us to be helps in honoring God with our lives and church body. This is not a merit system to earn heaven, but all should be found striving to glorify Christ by obeying and fulfilling these New Testament goals, which shows our faith and submission. We invite new members to strive together with us in the narrow way. Nobody can perfectly fulfill this standard in the "spiritual goals"; but all should be humbly striving -- that is the key. If someone has a better idea or improvement for the standard, please feel free to present it to the pastor and brethren at men's prayer meeting. PLEASE ASK QUESTIONS - YOU MAY HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD US. As the verse says below, you only need to be

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willing - that is what God asks. You can do this. You have the ability to be willing to learn and grow.

**For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." 2 Cor. 8:12**

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