

## **"Fitting the Lord's qualifications"**

### **Colossians 1:15-23 NASB**

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. <sup>19</sup> For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, <sup>20</sup> and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

<sup>21</sup> And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and

beyond reproach-- <sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

**Suppose you desire a certain job and you'd like to qualify for that position.**

Two things stand in your way:

**First, your relationship with the potential employer needs repair.**

You have offended this person and you need to be reconciled with him/her.

**How can you qualify for the job if you lack good rapport with the employer?**

**Second, because of your past actions, you doubt your ability to fulfill all the job's requirements.**

You want the position, but you question whether you can do what it entails.

**That inner voice keeps reminding, "You messed up before; you'll likely fail again."**

**Can you fulfill the job requirements if you doubt yourself?**

**Good relationships with God depend on resolving similar challenges.**

That's why our text speaks of reconciliation:

**“Although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach . . .”**

A winning life requires two kinds of reconciliation:

**A) First, reconciliation with God;**

**B) Second, reconciliation with ourselves.**

**Do you have an enemy within?**

I'm not referring to a live-in boyfriend, girlfriend, mother-in-law, or thief.

- **Does a voice within you tell you that you are not worthy?**
- **Does that voice remind and accuse you of mistakes you made last week or years ago?**
- **Do you feel unworthy or bad even when you haven't done anything wrong?**

**“You were formerly alienated and hostile in mind . . .”**

**Most of us share this classic view of sin:**

**God gives us choice of right or wrong;**

**If we make the right choice, God is happy;**

**Make the wrong choice, get ready for the fire and brimstone.**

**The first part is true:**

**righteousness pleases God.**

**But when we do wrong, does God no longer love us?**

**Are we walking a thin tight wire act like the Walenskis over the Grand Canyon?**

**In Jonathan Edward's words, are we like “Sinners in the hands of an angry God”?**

**Make no mistake; sinful acts displease God.**

**He does not “love us just the way we are” as so many religious teachers affirm.**

**A more insidious problem besets us that we should weigh carefully.**

**Bad choices acutely affect our inner person. Imagine Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.**

**God told them not to eat of the “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.”**

**Was that particular tree any more important to the Lord than all the others?**

**Was God simply being possessive?**

**"That tree has my favorite pink lady apples on it. They're not for sharing . . .**

**Don't fool with my personal stuff!"**

**Hardly.**

**If God created the Cosmos, why would one tree on a tiny planet concern Him?**

**If you have a large lawn, would you fret over the loss of one clipping of grass?**

**That tree represented the trusting relationship between God and His people.**

**The couple ate from the tree God forbade.**

**Note what changed immediately.**

When they first ate, the Lord was walking in the garden more casually than Fred Astaire in a forties movie.

**God did not change; He was still cool.**

**Adam and Eve felt the effects first.**

**As soon as they ate from the tree, they sensed a difference.**

**They felt guilty, naked and ashamed.**

**The couple sewed some fig leaf "designer jeans" to cover and hide themselves.**

I guarantee you; fig leaves do not feel satiny or silky.

**Before the Lord said a word, they were itchy, scratching, and embarrassed.**

**Guilt already changed Adam and Eve; their consciences dreadfully nagged them.**

**"Public opinion is a weak tyrant compared with my own private opinion," said Thoreau. "What a man thinks of himself—that is what determines, or rather indicates his fate."**

**Honestly, what do you think of yourself?**

**Is your guilt your worst enemy?**

**People who drank too much and who did drugs told me that doing them was the only way they could live with themselves.**

**At least the pain goes away for a while.**

**When they sober up, the pain returns.**

**Why?**

**That enemy inside brazenly accuses them.**

**Is your own mind your great enemy?**

**A second rocket stage blasts us.**

**When God confronted him, guess what Adam did?**

**A frequent way to deal with the enemy within is to say that he's somewhere else.**

**"It's that woman you gave me,"**  
argued Adam.

**Blaming others seems an easy out, but it rarely helps.**

**Point your fingers at someone and you often get your hand caught in a slammed door.**

**Blame others and they rightfully resent it. Impugning Eve doubled Adam's difficulty.**

- A) 1st, Adam's conscience pained him.**
- B) 2<sup>nd</sup>, Adam's marriage to Eve suffered after he blamed her for his bad choice.**

Disobeying God produces pain in other ways.

**Most of us know the story of David and Bathsheba as 2 Samuel 11 & 12 relates it.**

**But few people realize how many stop signs David blew past.**

**David saw Bathsheba bathing on a rooftop and asked his staff who she was.**

**The staff told David that Bathsheba was the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah.**

As most know, Uriah, Bathsheba's husband was serving in the military out of the country.

**When you find out Eliam's identity, you understand how dangerously and thoughtlessly David acted.**

**Bathsheba's husband Uriah belonged to a special elite army force called *The Thirty*.<sup>1</sup>**

Bathsheba's father Eliam ranked even higher in that special force.<sup>2</sup>

**Eliam's father (Bathsheba's grandfather) Ahithophel was David's chief advisor and military strategist.**

Ahithophel's job excelled that of the head of our country's Joint Chiefs of Staff

**It was serious enough that David slept with another man's wife and got her pregnant.**

**He also tried to cover it up.**

**David didn't succeed in his plot, so he arranged to have Uriah killed.**

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<sup>1</sup> See 2 Samuel 23: 39

<sup>2</sup> 2 Samuel 23: 34.

David himself stated that anyone who did something like that should die.

**Nathan, the prophet confronted David, 12:13, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die."**

David committed two horrible sins.

**But his biggest problem was not with God.**

**The Lord didn't remove his love; he forgave David.**

David's greatest problem was that inner voice.

**2 Samuel 13 continues the narrative.**

**Sometime later, David's firstborn son Amnon fell in love with his half-sister Tamar. Amnon contrived a story about being ill. He asked if Tamar could come to his apartment and fix food for him. When Tamar came to serve food, she resisted Amnon's amorous advances. Amnon then raped his half-sister, Tamar.**

After brooding about it for two years, Absalom, Tamar's full brother killed Amnon the rapist and then fled the country.

**What did David do about these dreadful happenings?**

**Nothing.**

**Why not?**

**David's guilt likely paralyzed him.**

He couldn't deal with sins of his own family.

**David's son Absalom later returned to Israel and led a revolt against David.**

**Can you guess who became part of the revolt and was Absalom's chief advisor?**

**Ahithophel, Bathsheba's grandfather.**

**David's sin resulted in massive outcomes neither he nor anyone could foresee.**

**Adam and Eve couldn't foreknow it either.**

**We human being can't.**

**As our text reads: "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior."**

**Our disobedience disappoints God and it devastates us.**

**"This is the age of the half-read page  
The quick hash and the mad dash,  
The bright night with the nerves tight  
The plane hop with the brief stop  
The lamp tan with the short span  
The big shot in a good spot  
The brain strain and the heart pain  
The catnaps until the spring snaps  
And the fun's gone." Author unknown**

- **Has your disobedience created an enemy in your mind?**
- **Has it silenced your lips against sin?**
- **Does your conscience plague you?**

No wonder we live in the midst of malice, envy, blame, guilt, hate, sadness, and despair.

**People feel terribly disillusioned.**

**What has God been doing all this time?**

He sent His only son to resolve our conflicts. Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection worked to reconcile us to God

**"God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" 2 Corinthians 5:19 NIV.**

**Even though we don't deserve it, God arranged reconciliation.**

**God loves us. Recall Jesus' Luke 15 story of the Prodigal Son?**

**When that son came home, he didn't feel worthy, did he?**

**He was not worthy; he asked to be re-admitted to the father's home as a servant.**

**But when he returned to his father to say "I'm sorry," his dad put a robe on him.**

**How can we be at peace with ourselves?**

- A) We quit blaming others.
- B) We do our best to stop doing wrong.
- C) Understand that God loves us in Christ and forgives us in him.
- D) **Start living for God in Christ and developing Christ-like qualities in us**  
**The Lord wants to give us good things and for us to live in harmony with ourselves and with one another.**

**The Lord willing, next week we'll give more details of connecting with this great news.**

Attached: "My Notes" section which Bob gives to those who attend where preaches.

## My Notes

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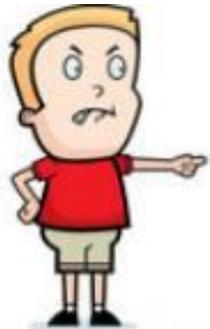


**The secret  
of winning.**



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David had several wives. According to 2 Samuel 3:2, Amnon was David's firstborn son. Amnon's mother was Ahinoam of Jezreel. Absalom was David's third born son. His mother was Maacah, daughter of the king of Geshur. Absalom's sister was Tamar. The events alluded to in today's sermon are related in 2 Samuel 11-15.

**2 Samuel 12:13, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die."**

Bathsheba's father was Eliam and her grandfather was Ahithophel.



**Titus 3:3 NIV**

**"At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another."**

**2 Corinthians 5:19**

**"God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting our sins against us."**



Luke 15 relates the parable of the lost son.

Bob Blair  
PO Box 176  
Cleghorn, IA 51014

[www.robertblairbooks.com](http://www.robertblairbooks.com)