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## **HOW TO LOOK UPON THE THINGS OF OTHERS**

**By Duane V. Maxey**

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others"  
(Philippians 2:4).

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There is a "not" in the above text, and before considering "HOW TO" look upon the things  
of others, let us first consider several ways "HOW NOT TO" look upon the things of others:

(1) LOOK NOT UPON THE THINGS OF OTHERS AS IF THEY ARE YOURS -- St.  
Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 3:21 that "all things are yours" should not be taken literally  
regarding the possessions of others in this world, and must be taken as in harmony with all of the  
rest of the Scriptures on the subject. Both Testaments condemn the stealing of that which belongs to  
others: See the graphic above for quotations from Exodus 20:15 and Titus 2:10.

One would think that "Christians" would be the last people on earth to appropriate the legal  
possessions of others to themselves as their own -- and, in fact, true Christians ARE the last to do  
such, but -- some deluded professors of Christianity are among the first to misappropriate the legal  
possessions of others as their own! When rationalizing about their taking of the legal property of  
others, their line of thought may even misinterpret Scriptures, following a line such as the  
following:

"1 Corinthians 4:7 says: 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst  
receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?' You got what you got, either from  
God, or from someone else -- therefore it really is not your exclusive property, and I have as much  
right to have it as do you, and I will take it!"

Such false and sophistic rationalizing often disregards the fact that in the eyes of the Law  
the other person has purchased, has obtained, has copyrighted, and both legally and exclusively  
owns what the greedy rationalizer is stealing!!!

There were 3 philosophies manifested in the Story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37. For the sake of better illustrating my point, I will relate those philosophies in the reverse order in which they appeared in the story: (a) The Philosophy of the Good Samaritan was: "What is mine is yours, and I'll share it." (b) The Philosophy of the Levite and Priest was: "What is mine is mine, and I'll keep it." (c) The Philosophy of the Thieves was: "What is yours is mine, and I'll take it!" -- and, following their greedy, and palpably dishonest reasoning, some professed Christians have the same attitude as those thieves! -- "What is yours is mine, and I'll take it!"

St. Paul recognized the sad fact that even those with the highest spiritual profession can manifest a total disregard for the property of others when he wrote in Romans 2:21 "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" Perhaps another justification that professed Christians (who are actually thieves) use for their purloining is: "I am doing this for the good of others -- that which I am taking from Bro. So-and-So I intend to share freely with all others; therefore, I am totally justified in what I do. He will not make these things freely available to others; I will; therefore he is wrong in withholding them, and I am right in taking them and giving them to those who cannot afford to pay the price he insists upon."

Such sophistries are sometimes very convincing -- especially when one convinces himself that he is taking something for unselfish and greatly benevolent purposes -- but, THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS "ROBINHOOD RIGHTEOUSNESS"! -- stealing from the rich to give to the poor is still stealing! "Robinhood Righteousness" is, in fact, "Robber-hood Righteousness"! and those who do such are really "Hoods"! Even when perpetrated by those who claim the most benevolent purposes when taking to themselves the legal, exclusive, and private property of others, the act is still wrong, and the ones who do it are thieves!

Is there a Scripture to back up my assertions? Indeed there is: In Romans 3:8 St. Paul declares that the "damnation is just" for those who profess to "do evil that good may come"!!!

When another person has legally obtained or created a thing, there is absolutely no justification for anyone -- especially a Christian -- to take that thing without the owner's consent -- even for the most benevolent purpose on earth!!! And, I think that thousands, if not millions, of professing Christians need to get their thinking straight on this matter. That to which a man or woman has a copyright, a title deed, or a receipt of purchase, etc. belongs exclusively to him or to her -- take it, and you are a thief -- no matter what you profess!!!

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(2) LOOK NOT UPON THE THINGS OF OTHERS WITH SELF-PITY -- "They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men" (Psalms 73:5). This verse teaches Christians that they must not look upon the things of others with self-pity, viewing others as more fortunate than themselves -- thinking that others "get all the breaks" while I "get all the hard knocks". When one misfortune after another strikes a Christian, there often comes the temptation to begin to look upon the things of others and see how things are going with them, and when one does this Satan is sure to show the Christian how "lucky" and "happy-go-lucky" the other fellow is.

Jesus told Peter: "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God." Then, "Peter seeing [John] saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?" (John 21:18-21). If such suffering was to be his lot, Peter wanted to know what cross John was going to have to bear. Was John going to have it easy? while he had it rough? His question was probably prompted by the Tempter.

Perhaps first, Satan tempts Christians to pity themselves while comparing their own misfortune with the good fortune of other Christians, but if they succumb to such self-sympathizing comparisons, Satan will surely next tempt them with a "poor-me!" repining while comparing their miserable misfortune with the easy life and "good luck" of a multitude of sinners all around them.

Satan rejoices when Christians, while looking upon the things of those in the world, begin to think like the delivered but discouraged and self-pitying Israelites in Numbers 11:5-6: "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes."

In the 73rd Psalm David spells out in detail how this subtle temptation nearly caused him to fall, and how a Divine revelation burst the bubble of the Satanic delusion that was playing on his mind, showing him how eternally "bad off" sinners really are, and bringing his perception back into an accurate focus:

"But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth... Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning... When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors... Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee" (Psalms 73:2-22).

Looking upon the things of others with a self-pity that sees oneself as cheated and blighted while others are prospered and blessed is the slippery slope down which many Christians have fallen, and no doubt countless thousands of such have never afterward regained their spiritual footing.

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(3) LOOK NOT UPON THE THINGS OF OTHERS IN SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS -- "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican" (Luke 18:11). There was no virtue in the Publican's sins for which God forgave him that day; but there was great evil in the self-righteous attitude of the Pharisee who looked upon the things in the praying Publican's life, compared them with his own good deeds, and thereby justified himself! In fact, it was the Publican who went home justified and the Pharisee who departed under God's condemnation, but apparently the self-righteous zealot was unaware of this. He fancied quite the opposite.

Romans 14:22 declares: "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." One's justifying faith is always between a man and God -- none others being allowed into the equation, and without any comparison with others. It is not how a man compares with another that justifies him before God; it is, rather, how the one believing himself to be justified before God actually compares with the divine requirements for such justification.

Happy is the man who is neither condemned by his own conscience nor by God in anything he does, or does not, do, for he is a genuinely justified man. Happy also is the one who does not measure himself by himself (2 Cor. 10:12), nor by any other person. The Publican measured himself by God's Law, knew he came short, purposed a complete repentance, begged for mercy, and went home a justified man. The Pharisee measured himself by the Publican, fancied that he stood tall in the eyes of God, and went home condemned in his awful pride. He came exceedingly short of the Divine Command to love his neighbor as himself; in fact, he despised the Publican. Therefore, in spite of his vain imagination that he was a saint, he was dwelling under the condemnation of God.

Further, Jesus indicated that this Pharisee was typical of "certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (Luke 18:9). Good works are absolutely imperative to Christian obedience to God, but at the same time, one must never forget that true righteousness is obtained and retained, not by a trust in one's self or one's good works, but by a trust that is only, and wholly, in the blood of Jesus. Also, the measure of one's true righteousness is revealed, not by looking upon the evil things in the lives of sinners and comparing one's life against such, but by looking upon the immaculate purity in the heart and life of Christ and by comparing one's heart and life with His -- and it takes the revelation of the Holy Ghost to enable a person to make that comparison accurately.

How many Holiness folks do you suppose have unconsciously fallen into the subtle temptation and habit of comparing their righteousness deeds with the evil deeds of those in the world, and thereby esteemed themselves too highly in God's sight?

During an altar service, how many professors of Holiness? have beheld a jewelry-bedecked, painted-up, ill-clad worldling weeping and begging for mercy at an altar of prayer, and have thought to themselves: "Oh God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, violating the Bible standards for dress and behavior, unjust, adulterers, or even as this vile seeker at the altar!" -- and in so judging, have gone home condemned in their awful spiritual pride, while

the poor penitent, unmercifully judged by them, has gone home freely forgiven of God, a new creature in Christ Jesus, from the inside out!

To make matters even worse: how many of such self-righteous professors of Holiness? have gone back to church and, spying that new Christian babe in Christ, have gone to them and laced them down good, telling them just how they must line up if they really are saved, and hope to keep saved -- sometimes expressing a grave doubt how anyone could really be saved who has not already measured up their standard!

Probably thousands, if not millions, of times the Holy Spirit has been greatly grieved by such Pharisaic judgments upon newborn babes in Christ, and those guilty of such are worthy of the same denunciation of Christ pronounced in Luke 11:52: "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

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(4) LOOK NOT UPON THE THINGS OF OTHERS AS A BUSYBODY -- "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters" (1 Peter 4:15).

A proper and healthy interest in the things of others is Biblical, and it is necessary in the Christian life, but nosiness is Divinely condemned. When King Uzziah ventured into the temple, which was "none of his business," the priests firmly resisted his trespass, declaring to this intruder: "It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God" (2 Chronicles 26:18).

Those who stick their nose into other people's business, like Uzziah, are trespassing into areas where they do not belong. When one trespasses physically by going through, over, or around some material barrier, the trespass is a very conscious one, but when one trespasses into the affairs and business of another, it is often possible to make that trespass with no bodily intrusion whatsoever -- the intrusion being made through vocal questioning only. But, there are ethical barriers also -- unseen, but very real and recognized by God as enclosing that which privately and only appertains to each individual. God knows everything about everyone, and nothing is hidden from His eyes, but -- make no mistake about it -- God does not condone the intrusion of any saint into the affairs of any other person on earth!!!

Some preachers make unwarranted intrusions into the private affairs of those in their congregations -- and in so doing make themselves "persona non grata" both to the human victims of their nosiness and to God Himself! "A word to the wise is sufficient," says the old proverb, "but every fool will be meddling," says an even older proverb (Proverbs 20:3). He is a fool, whether preacher or parishioner, and whether saint or sinner, who looks upon the things of others as a busybody.

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Finally, let us consider briefly, "How To Look Upon The Things Of Others":

(1) LOOK UPON THE THINGS OF OTHERS UNSELFISHLY -- "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Philippians 2:4). One of the most cruel aspects of the fallen human nature is that of selfishness. The Psalmist bewailed this when he wrote: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul" (Psa. 142:4). Why didn't they care? -- to a great extent, because they were too occupied with looking on their own things!

Christ "knew what was in man" (John 2:25); he knew that the warp of selfishness was woven deeply into both the nature and habits of men. Thus one of His commandments to His disciples was aimed at getting them to look away from their own things to the needs of millions of others around the globe: "I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

Even after Jesus' resurrection, and even following His 40-Day Post-Resurrection Ministry with them, His disciples were still interested too much in "their own things" -- too bent upon things selfishly coveted by Israel in one tiny part of the globe. This is revealed by the following question they posed to Jesus and by His response:

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8).

(2) LOOK UPON THE THINGS OF OTHERS COMPASSIONATELY -- Back when the USSR was posing an ominous threat to Democracy, I read something like the following: (a) When the COMMUNIST looks upon the world, he is moved with CONQUEST; (b) When the CAPITALIST looks upon the world, he is moved with COMMERCE; but (c) When CHRIST looks upon the world, He is moved with COMPASSION. Obviously, when Christians look upon the things of others in the world, they too should be moved by the same thing that moved Christ: Matthew 9:36 "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."

(3) LOOK UPON THE THINGS OF OTHERS GENEROUSLY -- God curses the miserly and blesses the liberal. The selfish and stingy Nabal was ever and anon "looking only upon his own things." After David and his men had for long weeks and months protected Nabal's interest, Nabal spurned David's request for a few needed supplies, saying: "Shall I then take MY bread, and MY water, and MY flesh that I have killed for MY shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?" (1 Sam 25:11). In so saying, Nabal (meaning "Fool") showed that his name and his nature were well-matched. He was a fool, both for his cruel selfishness, and for his dishonesty. When he said of David and his men, "I know not whence they be" he was probably lying. For a long while, he had probably known well who it was that had been "a wall" of protection guarding his men and his flocks. But a man who is miserly and stingy will always find

or fabricate an excuse for not giving at all, or for not giving generously. And, like Nabal, such men are fools, often perishing both physically and eternally in their tiny little selfish world. It has been said that the smallest package on earth is: "a man that is all wrapped up in himself."

According to James 1:5 "God, [gives] to all men liberally, and upbraideth not," and a number of other scriptures reveal that He expects His followers to emulate His Divine Generosity -- His ungrudging Liberality -- and He blesses those who give "not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

Yes, Christians should look upon the things of others generously -- and when one is generous at heart, he will find a way to put that generosity in action: Isaiah 32:8 "But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand." When a man really IS generous, he does more than think and dream about liberally giving to others; he "deviseth liberal things"; he creates ways to be actually and actively generous and benevolent to others -- and, according to the above verse, "he stands" as a result of his bestowed generosity. The clear inference here is: a spiritual FALL shall come to those who are miserly, niggardly, and stingy toward others and toward God.

The admonition in Nehemiah 8:10 has an application in the lives of New Testament Christians, who have received so much from the Hand of God: "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared.." And, there is truth in the modern saying: "What goes around, comes around," for "all that we send into the lives of others, comes back, comes back, into our own." 2 Corinthians 9:6 "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

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THE END