

Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 63 The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit

Goodness #7

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Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings brethren, once again. This is the continuation of that long series that we are doing on the fruits of God's Holy Spirit. At the very outset, I would like to say thank you very, very much for the host of splendid comments that have been made by so many of you concerning this series. It's been a very distinct pleasure of mine to do it and I can assure every one of you that I have derived probably more good from it than anyone else because of the intense study that has been put into it and the determination to live up to those things which I am uncovering. So I thank you very much for those kind comments and the distinct appreciation for the fact that so many of you are making very deep and determined efforts to live up to those things—not because they are said by yours truly, but because they are from God. They are the spiritual manifestations of that character which God requires of us.

Now, by way of introduction, this is tape number seven of the specific series on the subject of "goodness." Last time, we had commenced and virtually completed the word *ghehsed*, g-h-e-h-s-e-d, which, of course, is the anglicized spelling. And as I've said so many times before, I would like to complete each one of these distinct words in a single tape, but it isn't always possible because some of them are just far too long. So that began in tape number six and we are going to have to complete it today. But following that we want to get into and hopefully complete the one where we have selected only certain of the verses out of the very, very broad usage of the word *tohv*, t-o-h-v, which is a basic word that means "good." But sometimes it is translated as "goodness" in the Bible.

Now, obviously, "good" is a foundational word. "Goodness" is merely an application of that which is "good." And, as I will comment at the conclusion of this series, it is of interest to us to begin to look into what God classifies as "good" versus what He classifies as "evil." So many of the things that we do in life that we think

are acceptable, or pleasing in our own sight, are classified as evil in the sight of God, and the gradual transition from the natural proclivities of man—that which is evil (his own carnal nature, his own natural inclinations)—into the way which is right, pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God is, of course, predicated on faith. And it is, as a transition, very gradual in nature. It doesn't transpire overnight. It's a matter of mastery; it's a matter of overcoming; it's a matter of living those principles with the determination that we are going to live up to those things which we have come to see and to understand.

So it isn't going to happen dramatically—it isn't going to happen quickly. It may be dramatic so far as we ourselves, individually, are concerned, because of the emotional trauma which we experience in effecting that transition. You know, it's an awesome struggle and it's a fight to gain one single step. We are climbing Mount Everest spiritually—indeed and truly. And so it doesn't come easily. Each step becomes more exhilarating, surely, because we have ascended one more step upward and the view or panorama takes on greater grandeur and meaning, but, at the same time, we sometimes become more breathless, more fatigued—it becomes more difficult each step upward. But that doesn't mean that our resolve should be less. With each step we should become more dogged and more determined than ever to go on to perfection because it is only the man that makes it to the top that can finally claim victory. If we make it all the way to within the last hundred feet and falter just before we make it, we are still failures. We make it—we are victorious—only if we get to the top.

And so, brethren, let's view it as a matter of scaling Mount Everest spiritually. And let's remember that the task becomes more difficult every step of the way after we get that close. It begins easy because the ascent is gradual; because the obstacles are few; and because the difficulties are measured in relationship to our aspirations, our enthusiasm, and all the other positive characteristics with which we begin. But, then, as we begin to climb and it becomes more difficult, our resolve begins to lessen unless we keep it sky-high by some kind of input—by a dogged determination on our parts. It's very easy to finally say, "I give up." The fingers are bruised, the feet are sore, the muscles ache, the mind seems to rebel—everything becomes defiant and seems to be against us. And that truly, brethren, is characteristic of that spiritual fight we are encountering—in which we are engaged at the present time. And we must not be failures. We must be victorious. Because those who come out on top are the ones

who are going to be selected by God—and God has Himself carved out that obstacle course. And if we complete that obstacle course, we are the only ones who will be victorious. At that time only we prove to God that we are willing to make every human, physical sacrifice necessary in order to achieve that victory. And so it is absolutely important for us to put forth the maximum effort and to make the most dogged determination to put on these traits and characteristics.

We cannot do it in our own right, no. That isn't what I am talking about. We cannot create our own faith; we cannot make our own goodness; we cannot make any of the spiritual traits or characteristics of God. But we can cry out to God mightily through the power of His Spirit and the manifestation of faith in the achievement of those objectives—those goals.

So God expects us to put forth that kind of effort—that determination to live up to it. "Let this mind be in you." That mind of Christ was very determined. It was a mind that never catered, never gave in, for one moment. For He would have been a sinner Himself if He had done so. He never gave in one time to the whimsical nature with which He was born. He was not born with an angelic nature. He was born with the nature of men—of the seed of Abraham. And He encountered every trial and every experience that you and I do—every temptation to sin; every temptation to speak when He should not; every temptation to manifest the natural resentments, the natural carnality of the flesh. Jesus Christ bore that test and He went through everything that you are going through and many times more. Because His was equal to the problems of all humanity combined, and yet He sinned not.

I tell you, when I think about this, my amazement, admiration and any other word you want to use for Christ, goes sky-high. The more problems I see in my own life, I realize that He went through exactly the same thing—every one of them—and yet, never gave in once. And we sin daily. Oh, the mercy of God. It just absolutely is overwhelming if we can only see it. But we are never going to see it unless we really see ourselves for what we are and what the real responsibility is. Then we see the wide chasm that exists between where we stand and what we must achieve.

So we realize readily that we cannot do it on our own. But that doesn't mean we don't put forth any effort. The will and the determination must be

manifested in our minds and then God is going to give us the capability. But we have to make that start and we have to step out in faith and conviction and then God will pick us up and carry us through. What a glorious and marvelous promise—assurance—that is to us.

So, brethren, we want to move through the remainder of these texts now on this technical side of the word *ghehsed* and then from there we are going into the word *tohv* in a limited fashion because that word means "good" in a broad sense. And I am not going to cover the full subject of what is good in the sight of God. It would be a long, long study in and of itself. But we'll pick that up at some time. But at the present time, we merely want to pick up its manifestation in its nominative form: "goodness"—that which is manifested within us as a result of that which is "good." So quickly, let's review, then, what we have covered so far under the word *ghehsed*:

Number one, we covered the concept of abundance as a marvelous trait of God. In other words, *ghehsed*, or "goodness", is an abundant trait of God Himself.

And then second, we find that even man's goodness merits recognition. Indeed it does, because it doesn't come very easily. There has to be some form of control in the life of that individual who manifests any form of goodness. You know, you have seen marvelous traits and characteristics of neighbors that you admire and respect. That doesn't mean that he—or she, or they, or both, or whoever it may be—was born with that natural proclivity. Not at all. When you see somebody manifesting a great deal of kindness and benevolence and affection, it means that even from a technical vantage point—even from a carnal vantage point—that it is a matter of character. It's because they have willed to live this kind of life. It would have been just as easy as any other human being for the people who manifest these traits and characteristics to have been snobs, indifferent, problematic, filled with wrath, resentment and contempt, disgust, or any other characteristic that is bad in nature. Sure, they could have lived that way too. But people sometimes have willed—as the Apostle Paul was inspired to write by God's Holy Spirit that some are "a law unto themselves." They are still Gentiles, but they are a law unto themselves because they live those principles—because they have willed it. That doesn't mean that they are headed, at this time, for eternal life, because God has not even called them. But it does mean that they are going to reap marvelous blessings for that character they

manifest in their lives here and now. And then it is going to be much easier for them tomorrow to accept God's Truth when He reveals it to them. So even man's goodness, then, deserves recognition, and we owe some respect to anybody that exhibits those characteristics.

And then third, we notice the permanency of God's character or God's goodness. The interesting thing is that sometimes the goodness of human beings has limits to it. There are dual limits: limits within times but also limits within direction. In other words, I'm going to be good to certain people because I just like them and respond to them, but then to others I won't do it. So, we impose upon our "goodness" certain limits. We are, by nature, partial. Whereas, God loves all—both the just and the unjust, the wicked and the good. God loves all of humanity. And if we are going to put on the character of God, we must exhibit these traits and characteristics to all people regardless of what they do to us. Even though they spitefully use us, they persecute us, they say bad things about us, we turn right around and heap coals of fire upon their heads because we respond, not in like kind, but with goodness—with kindness and with mercy.

So the permanency of God's goodness is the exhibition of one of the valuable traits of the nature and character of God. That is, it isn't here today and gone tomorrow. It isn't ephemeral in nature—it's permanent, it's absolute, and it is omnidirectional. In other words, we do not impose limitations upon it at all.

Then, point number four is that the scope of God's goodness is incomprehensible. The more we think we understand of the goodness, the greatness, the majesty, the kindness of God, the more we realize exists. It's like this panorama that I mentioned earlier: As we ascend Mount Everest, we think the view is spectacular when we have ascended about two thousand feet, but then it is amazing what the difference is between twenty-nine thousand and two thousand feet. And so, only when we are at the apex—and the apex is likened unto the very divine nature and the character of God, the perspective of the Eternal God—only then can we see the totality in all of its grandeur. It is to mankind incomprehensible until he achieves it. But every step of the way—as we struggle, and as we effect mastery in our lives—it is definitely revealing and rewarding because the view gets better, the response is more exhilarating.

And then point number five is that God's goodness merits man's praise. You know, we, by nature, can ask ourselves so many times: "Why should we worship God?" You know, you don't worship other human beings, do you? That absolutely is idolatry and God will not tolerate it. Well, then, why is bowing before God considered sacred and holy? And, you know, our natural minds can play a lot of tricks if we are not careful, because we get to looking at it and we might say, "Well, wait a minute here. How come? Here's one intelligent Being requiring another intelligent being to bow and scrape before Him." Well, let me take the word "scrape" out. To bow before Him. "Scrape" has an evil connotation. Yes, my dear brethren, we owe that kind of respect to God, and one of these days when we see God in all of His majesty and His glory, and we realize the lowly, humble state of man, we are going to realize why we were required to worship Him. The problem with man is that he thinks he is almost in the footsteps of God already. That's his problem. The reason for the worship, brethren, and the depth and the intent of that worship is comprehended only as we see ourselves in our true station and we see God in His true station. And then we realize the incomprehensible chasm that exists between the two. And when we realize that, then we can recognize worship and the reason for it.

So, brethren, let's come to understand the awesome majesty of God. And the only way we are going to understand that is by studying. That's the reason for going through these things. Because as I go through these spiritual manifestations, what I'm talking about, brethren, is the character of God—a God that is absolutely immutable; a God that absolutely cannot make a mistake because of character, not because He doesn't have the power and ability. He has no limitations imposed upon Him. But by character, God Himself has willed to live those things. He is God.

And when we realize that, then we realize why God, in the development of character, had to subject us to all these ruthless, tyrannical experiences we are encountering today. Brethren, God cannot—could not—produce the kind of character that He wills and wants, except we go through those things. It is an absolute, imperative experience. So we have to run up against the obstacles of life. We have to encounter the troubling situations where, if we don't control our minds and our tongues, we are going to make every conceivable mistake. And then we realize when we make a mistake we pay the price for it—the consequences. But every time we control it, we are the reapers of the

benefits—the joys and the satisfactions that go with it. How many of us realize the real joy it is when we just simply bite our tongues and refuse to say anything? Oh, surely, we can feel justified in saying it—and the situation might even warrant it from a human perspective. But when we finally bite our tongues and we refuse to say anything, then we all of a sudden recognize that we have not injured somebody, we have not hurt somebody, we have willingly accepted the price of that altercation—the problem or the situation—whatever it may be. That doesn't necessarily have to change our perspective. That doesn't necessarily mean that we have to agree with the individual that is involved. What I am talking about is the avoidance of that which inflames and creates animosity and resentment.

Brethren, these are the characteristics of "good," and it is the tell-tale evidence in our own personal lives of effective control. Now, when we let our mouths run off—loosely and unguardedly—without girding them up, as the Apostle Paul said, girding up the loins of our minds and our mouths, we just make inconceivable mistakes. We make every kind of mistake. But we must learn to control them, and it is a matter of controlling those minds so that we don't think those things and we don't let our tongues say everything we even think. Sometimes we think it and we hate ourselves for it, but then why make two mistakes? You think it and then turn around and say it. No, brethren, we are going to have to control those things and control the way we look at it and the way we respond to the various stimuli of life.

Now, so God requires our praise, our adoration, our respect—our worshipful adoration, if you please, toward Him, because He is worthy. You know, the Bible says, speaking of Christ and concerning that worship: "He is worthy." Well, so is the Eternal God. He is the epitome. And God the Father is deserving of all that respect—that worship, that adoration. And He is deserving of the effort we put forth to honor Him and to respect Him. Every time we cater to the whims of the self, we are denying God—every time we allow ourselves the freedom to express ourselves as we will. As people say within this country, "the freedom of speech" and so on. Why don't they impose limitations upon their own freedoms? God Almighty is the author of limitation, and we must limit ourselves. But people are constantly talking about the idea that they ought to have the right to say, to write, to do anything they please. No, they shouldn't. There are definite, definite impediments to that type of thing and above all, number one, is that when we do, we injure somebody else. Now, does it mean that I have a right to write

anything that I want to or say anything I want to if I embarrass or humiliate or castigate or hurt somebody else? Yet, newspaper editors believe that they have a right to say anything they want. They don't care whether or not they hurt anyone else. No, brethren, that kind of thing doesn't make sense whatsoever. The only rights we have are those rights afforded when we do not hurt or injure somebody else. And when we do that, we are truly walking in the Way of Life. So, if we are going to hurt somebody else, if we retaliate and hurt somebody else because they hurt us, well, that's just human. But if you want to be divine—that is, if you want to have the nature of God—then don't react and respond in like kind. God doesn't. For if He did, there wouldn't be a one of us alive.

Alright, brethren, we've laid a foundation—I think a pretty good foundation—for what we want to cover today. But the interesting sixth point here is that we must beware of men who praise themselves. You know, God is worthy of the worship and the praise of His created subjects, but men have assumed certain things that belong to God. And if they cannot get it from somebody else, they will sing their own praises. And God does not allow that. That is a no-no—that is absolutely forbidden. I am only going to cover one particular point here, but through the book of Proverbs I could give you an almost endless array of significant characteristics in this category that are forbidden by God. Let somebody else praise you—let somebody else effect that honor and that respect. Let somebody else extol that individual.

So He said here in Proverbs the twentieth chapter and let's note verse six: "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness." Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness, "but a faithful man who can find?" In other words, what He is saying here is that the one who does his own praising is not faithful at all. "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness." And that is forbidden by God. Let someone else sing your praises. Let somebody else note those features and those characteristics that are worthy of that respect. Remember that we saw back here that every man's goodness does merit recognition. But does that mean that the man who has done it should go out and in a self-proclaiming proclamation say, "Look how good I am. Look at the wonderful things that I've done"? Brethren, that is the thing that is happening with far too many people of arrogance and vanity today in memorials, obelisks, and various things—statues that they are creating for themselves. Why do they do that? Because they want that name to stand out. All politicians get involved in it. Why in the world don't

they just say, "Well, wait a minute. I'm not interested in the eulogy that can be given to the self. I hope that I can be sustained—I hope that I can be honored and respected for the things that I have attempted to accomplish rather than for my name and what I am"? But that wouldn't be satisfying to a human being. So what he does is create his own monument and we see them done week in and week out. Time and time again, people are erecting their own monuments: carving their names in buildings, putting up these statues to themselves, buildings that are named after them, or institutions, or organizations, or whatever—or programs. It's ridiculous—absolutely ridiculous. Any time you see that kind of thing, you know that the purpose is wrong—absolutely wrong. Why don't we give honor and glory to our Creator? Why don't we honor God who is worthy? And we can only honor God when we see Him in His true perspective. How honorable and worthy He really is.

"[B]ut a faithful man who can find?" That is, a man who recognizes himself for what he is. That's a faithful man. And he also recognizes what God is. And when he sees those two things, he certainly is not going to be seeking any honor for himself, and he sometimes will even be embarrassed and humiliated by praise and honor from somebody else because he knows how miserably—how wretchedly—he fails in his own right. Yes, he may manifest dignity and grace. He may not stand up and deny the individual who has said something about him, but in his own heart he says, "Oh, that I could have really lived up to it—that I might have been worthy of that. But I have to know myself for what I really am." Brethren, that is exactly true of us as human beings. How despicable we really are—how unworthy of any recognition or any credit. How terrible we are in so many ways. If everything we think and all our behavioral patterns, and all of our emotions should all of a sudden hang out without any hiding factor whatsoever, how humiliating and how embarrassing it would be. But thank God that flesh and darkness and time and circumstances blot out many things. And so, people don't know what is coursing our minds; and what we are fighting; and what we are up against; and what we are struggling against at all occasions.

Yes, it's a good thing that many of those things are hidden. We are all fighting against them, so let's not be worrying about somebody else. Let's worry about our own personal selves. That's the responsibility that God has given to us. That is the theater of warfare—our warfare. And we had better be fighting that one. We have never been given a right to fight in any other theater. That is the

theater of our activity. It is the only warfare over which we have been made a general, and we do have that responsibility. And God expects us to work on it. We have no other responsibility along those spiritual lines.

So let's not be singing our own personal praises. Let's not extol ourselves, because we are not worthy of it. And we have become intensely aware of how unworthy we are because we have begun to see what we really are—how base we are. And, you know, one of the factors—and I've noticed this for a long time—that has become key in the departure of so many people from that faith once delivered is that they just simply cannot accept how bad they really are. That is the one feature I have noticed now for approximately seven years. The minute they begin to agitate and the minute they find themselves in a strange attitude—a spirit that begins to dominate them—you can find the manifestation in a reluctance to accept themselves for what they really are. That will always manifest itself because men want to consider themselves a whole lot better than they really are.

Now, men are men. They are made of flesh. They cannot be anything else. They are naturally what they are. If you take a hunk of dirt out here, you cannot make something else out of that dirt. Now, you may convert it. Maybe you can extract from it some characteristics, you can process it out and therefore come up with a better product—something else that may be within it—but as a piece of dirt it is dirt, and that is it. Now, God is effecting this transition process—this chemistry change—which no one else has been able to do. And the counterfeit of that is alchemy—when they thought they could change one base substance into something of glory. But only God can make that kind of transition, and God is going to transfer us from this base element of human nature which we are—flesh—into the glorified realm of the Spirit. Philippians three and verse twenty-one is a beautiful text in that regard. So God alone can effect that transition, but, brethren, when we look at a pile of junk, that pile of junk is a pile of junk, and that is what it will always remain. That's what it is. So when we look at human flesh, we are human flesh. And when you look at human flesh, God told you what it was. It is everything that is bad—everything that is evil. And then He said, by a conversion process—by a process that only God can carry out by the power of that chemical (well, I'll call it an act of chemistry because we understand the tangible), by that indwelling presence of this other agent, then, there is a process taking place by which we are going to have all the bad leached out and there is going to be a marvelous end product likened unto gold, or silver, or

diamonds, or whatever, but of intrinsic and of absolute, inherent glory and value. But the nature that we have naturally is exactly what it is. Now, we can become a whole lot better. It isn't what we have achieved in our own right, it is because of what that Spirit is doing within us—the power by which we can effect that necessary transition from that bad state, that bad nature, into the glorified character, the nature, of God.

Now, men, therefore, should not be praising themselves, because they should recognize what they are. And when they perform dutiful responsibilities in their relationship with others and they manifest some element of goodness or kindness—or some other marvelous trait or characteristic—they let somebody else recognize it. And in so doing, they receive the honor and the glory that they justly deserve—not because of what they have done—but what they were able to accomplish by some motivation or some purpose, and usually by the Spirit, the help of God, in the case of those who are called, at least.

But what is the real problem now? We found that we must beware of men who praise themselves, and we found out that God's goodness does merit man's praise. And we found that the goodness of God is incomprehensible and that it is absolutely permanent. But what is man's problem in relationship to goodness? Here is a very, very interesting text over here in Hosea six and verse four:

O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

Now, what happens to a morning cloud? Under the heat of circumstances, it vaporizes. So, we may have all kinds of goodness under given circumstances, but when the heat of some condition transpires, all of a sudden it vaporizes like a cloud. That's what God said of Ephraim and Judah. No, my beloved and dear friends and servants of the Eternal God, let's understand that goodness is of little value unless it has the permanency characterized in the nature of God. Does it come and go with times, conditions and circumstances, or is it absolute? God remains good. He is the immutable—the unalterable—God. But all too frequently, *our* goodness comes and goes in accord with conditions and circumstances. That is not goodness at all. That is as partial as human nature itself. That's allowing ourselves to deceive ourselves that we have been good at a

certain point when really there wasn't any pressure on us in the first place. The only time that we can take credit for any goodness—well, I don't know that we should take any credit, period—but the only time credit is deserving, whomever may give it, is when we manifest continuity of purpose despite the conditions or the circumstances. So let's not allow our character to fluctuate with times, conditions and circumstances. Let's be permanent in our goodness—let's be consistent, regardless of the pressures that may be exerted. And sometimes, brethren, this may mean that you are literally going to have to get right up and walk out in order to avoid saying or doing anything. You may even have to go out and pray and come back and say, "My apology for walking out, but I wasn't going to allow myself to get out of hand."

Brethren, we have to *will* to do the Truth of God. We have to want to do it so much, that at all costs—whatever the embarrassment, whatever the humiliation that we have to experience—we are willing to go through it in order to manifest the character of God. And we are going to have to do it.

It is, brethren, not a fanciful action in which we are presently found. It is life and death. It is not an exercise in futility. Brethren, it is the masters—the overcomers—that are going to be in the Kingdom of God. It is now time for you and me to will within our minds and to back it up by the faith of Almighty God—to make the determination to be masters in our own lives. Let's put on the goodness of God by the help of God. God has called us. We don't have any equivocal concern with respect to that call. The people of God know who they are. We are at least a part of it and we don't have to worry about how many there are and where they may be. What I am talking about are those who are hearing. Let's not worry about whether or not this group, that group, or some other group is a part of it. But, brethren, you are. You are now hearing that voice. It is now your responsibility to live up to it and to act on those things.

Let's put on the goodness of God and let's manifest the character of God. Because if we do, we are going to be the recipients not only of the great and the awesome eternal reward that God has promised for the future, but also, we are going to receive the abundant reward here and now in all the joys that we can experience; the lack of mental frustration; the lack of self-condemnation following mistakes and difficulties. You've gone through that many times when you have said, "Oh, if I had just kept my mouth shut. If I had not said or done this or that." The point is, to think about it first.

You know, I was thinking about that this morning as I was reviewing my notes. How many of us would be a million times better off if certain stimuli occurred to us—responses to given situations concerning what somebody else said; what we have read; conditions and circumstances with which we are surrounded; whatever it might be? And if we jotted down our response—we wouldn't say it, we would jot it down and say, "I'll make no response for one solid day." You know, if we thought about it, then, throughout the day, we would look at it at the end of the day and say, "It isn't worth it." Literally that is what we would say. The problem is the heat of the moment, which is nothing more than the lust, the greed, the emotional stimuli of the mind and the flesh. That's what it is. The heat of the moment drives us—compels us—to do things, and then we kick ourselves later. We cannot understand why in the world we did this or that. Well, brethren, we ought to understand why, because we didn't use intelligence—we didn't use good sense. We used the emotional stimuli—the heat of the moment—and that lust, that greed, or whatever it is that was injured or hurt, retaliated, responded. It wasn't good sense; it wasn't good integrity; it wasn't balance and wisdom—not at all. So, why don't we just try setting these things down, holding ourselves in check, then, for at least half a day—maybe a day—pray about it a number of times, and think about it, and ask ourselves: "Do I really want to say anything?" And then ask yourself: "Why do I want to say it? I want a good, intelligent answer, and not because my emotions were hurt; not because somebody stepped on my little toe; not because the self sustained injury; but I want a practical reason that makes sense—that adds up—and that is going to reap a good benefit on the other end." You know, if we do that, I doubt that we are going to be saying too much. We are going to look at it and say, "It isn't worth it. Do I want to hurt my relationship with somebody else? Do I want to leave a bad taste?"

You know, once you have made your mark, the mark is there—the scar is going to be there. You may ask for forgiveness—you may do all kinds of things. But the mark has still been made and people are going to remember it. They have a tendency to recall things—and even the Bible speaks of that. Because if another situation comes up, they are going to remember it. Doesn't even God do that? You know, He said He will put it behind, but then if we go ahead and sin again, then He is going to remember not only that sin but everything that has gone before. All of a sudden, the whole thing comes back on us. So people are going to say, "Well, you know, I dropped all of this, but I just now remember that this

was the trait, this was the characteristic, these were the circumstances of that party, or that group"—whatever the circumstances may have been. There will be a recall. But if you never made the mark in the first place, there can be no recall. So why don't we learn to think an issue through first? That is really the essence of goodness—that's what it is all about. To be good *is* both mental and verbal control. When we have control over our lives we don't manifest it through glinting eyes; through clenched teeth; through verbal abuse; through hateful expressions; even our countenances can witness against us. We need to be very careful. And let us be responsive out of love and affection and kindness—a real concern, a compassion for other people.

So, brethren, let's review because I don't want to get into this next word. I'd rather make it a single tape in its own right.

Let's think now, very quickly, of the seven points that we have covered in this particular two-tape sub-series on the technical word, *ghehsed*. It is an abundant trait of God. That is, what we are talking about here—and I want you to remember this—is the nature of God. It is the trait—the characteristic—of God. And if we are going to put on the nature, it is the trait or the characteristic that we are going to have to have. That's what conversion is all about; that's what God wants us to achieve. It is the abundant trait and characteristic of God. So, therefore, it is the manifestation of the divine Family—the nature of that God, the character of that Family that you and I supposedly want to be born into.

And we cannot be born into it simply because we hope to obtain carnal—less than ideal—ends. It cannot be predicated on the desire to merely escape fleshly destruction—we don't want to have to give up life. It has to be predicated on an outgoing concern—a compassion. It's the desire to live the purpose of God and to be of intense personal and eternal help. It's a responsiveness—an outgoing compassion and concern.

You know, we are not going to be limited in our scope. We are not going to be limited in our activities where we are just sitting in a cradle or swing, or whatever it is, and there we are going to bask in sunshine and glory forever. Not at all. The reason to be born into God's Family is that there is some awesome purpose in the future, and that purpose is manifested in the Spirit of God—which is in outgoing concern. Well, then it is going to have to go outside of the self. In

what direction I don't know—the Bible doesn't reveal it. But I know one thing: It is made up of the love of God, and the love of God is not limited to self. It's outside of self. So, therefore, to be born into the Kingdom of God is not to be born into the selfishness of luxury and ease—which I am afraid sometimes is the motivation of too many people. It must be the desire to be of eternal help.

I don't know what we are going to do. I know only that what God requires us to manifest today in our relationship with others is concern and compassion and mercy. Are we going through all of these things, laboring to put on this kind of nature—this kind of characteristic of God—only to find that we revert back to the selfishness of man when we are born into the Kingdom of God where we are going to satisfy our desire for laziness, to satisfy our desire for the lap of luxury, to satisfy our desire for the abundance of everything with which we can possibly surround ourselves in life? Why, that is the aspiration of human beings. That's what they would like to have. How many people would just love to have that glory and honor right now as they sit in their multi-million-dollar homes and they reside in the lap of luxury—there isn't anything that their nature couldn't purchase or secure for itself; they satisfy it absolutely and they pamper it and they surround it with the finest clothing; they surround it with the finest luxury and circumstances, and with all the beauty and everything that caters to the natural self? Well, if that is why we are going to be born into God's Kingdom, all we are doing is substantiating that same nature in the Kingdom of God. Not at all. Down here, God demands that we give up those things and that we become subject to the trials, and the experiences, and the circumstances of life. So we have to give up these things in order to qualify, only to revert back to the very thing that we had to overcome? Now, does that make a lot of sense? Not at all.

Then, this great, awesome, abundant trait of God that we must manifest today by the power of God's Holy Spirit is going to live on for all eternity. God did not sit in the lap of luxury. If God had concerned Himself only with that, you and I wouldn't even be here. But God wanted to share whatever He has and, therefore, He made human beings, and made salvation possible. So, when we are born into the very Family of God, we are going to be born with that same nature—that desire to share, to give, and to make sacrifices for others. Jesus Christ came down out of the awesome love of God, but He also came down because of *His* love as the Creator of man (because all things were created by Him, through Him and for Him). And because of that intense love, Jesus Christ came

down here in the center of, not only His love, but the love of the Father, to serve humankind whom He had created. Why did He create man as an object of His love and concern? Because of their nature to serve and to give and to share: the nature of love. Then, when you and I are born into the Family of God, we are going to be born with that same nature. We are not going to want to sit on a pink cloud; we are not going to bask in idleness and ease; we are not going to surround ourselves with all the luxuries of spiritual existence. Not at all. These are going to be there and they are going to be compelling, motivating factors in even greater purposes—purposes of giving and love, the manifestation of concern. And that is going to be the purpose of mankind.

Well, this is an abundant trait of God. That's why you and I are here. We are the reflection of that very love—the goodness of God manifested in the fact that He wants so desperately to share this great glory, this awesome position of power and so on, that God Himself possesses. It is inherent—intrinsic—in His life. And He wants to give it to human beings. But I tell you, if we are going to achieve it on the basis of achieving that same Spirit and attitude, then what do you think we are going to do once we have that Spirit and attitude? Put a fence around it like a monkey? Not at all. We want to share life and vitality and strength and joy, and we begin to do that here and now. Even though people may say things against us, if our spirits and attitudes are right—as God's Spirit was, even though we were not deserving of it, yet He gave His Son Jesus Christ and He poured out His awesome love upon us—so we, today, even though somebody else may not be deserving of it, must manifest all the love and affection, kindness and goodness in the world toward those people.

Now, when we start living up to those things, brethren, we are going to be the recipients of the awesome blessings of God. But we are going to have to live up to them. It is a high calling. It is not just a mundane responsibility, it is a tremendous task. It is awesome in all of its glory and its character. That's why we have been called. Let's begin to put it on. And I don't mean because we can put feathers in our own caps; I don't mean because we can praise ourselves, as we saw here. No, I mean because we want to serve; because we want to do; because we want to help; we have an intense feeling for other people, and ultimate regard for them; we have a sensitivity both mentally and physically with respect to those people who are hurting, who are injuring, themselves. That's what we must do; that's the nature that we are putting on.

Yes, and when that transpires, surely we recognize that in other people. And they do merit the praise, the glory, the credit that somebody else can tender. It does not mean that we can go around patting ourselves on our own backs and saying how good we are. Let somebody else see it. You do it in secret and then God shall reward you openly. You just set about it and be kind, and accept the gaffe that goes with it—accept the comments, the curled lips of other people, the abuse that you may go through. We, as human beings, have given God plenty of gaffe, but He didn't give up on us. So don't worry about what somebody else does, just go ahead and do it. You are the one who is going to reap the reward. And then let somebody else, in due time, see it and say whatever they need to say about it. It will always come out, because if human beings don't do it, God will do it in His own appointed time. So let's not worry about the praise of somebody else. It will come in due time, because as I said, if human beings don't do it, God will do it. But you are not serving for that purpose anyway. Because the minute you begin to serve for that, you are never going to get it, because you don't deserve it. The motivation is wrong.

And, then, let's remember that God's goodness is permanent. How many of our difficulties today revolve around the fear that what you think you see may not continue? You look at it and say, "Well, boy, it looks like things are getting better. I just wonder if it will continue." You see, that is the fallacy—the terrible problem—of human beings. I admit that when I look at a lot of people today—because of the things that I have gone through, the experiences that have taken place in my life, the people that have come and gone with respect to the faith once delivered—I look at them and wonder, "Well, I wonder how long they are going to be here." You know, I just don't want to get cynical, and so it is a real struggle on my part to say, "Well, I'm not the one that is chargeable. That for which God holds me accountable is merely proclaiming the Truth. The number that comes out on the other end is the responsibility of God. I'm not held accountable for that at all. But I am held accountable as a called and chosen servant of God for preaching that faith once delivered." And, brethren, I have willed to do that. So I have to get to looking at it sometimes and remember that it isn't a matter, at all, of my counting the products on the other end. That's a bad trait and a bad characteristic. Leave that up to God. That's God's responsibility. But as long as the potential, the possibility, is given—the provision is made whereby I can teach and instruct and guide people—I have everything I need to fulfill the purpose for which God has called me. That is my responsibility.

And, brethren, you have a comparable responsibility—in whatever avenue it is. Is it your responsibility to worry about what somebody else does? You know, we cloud our lives constantly because of "if so-and-so would do this or that, then I would do so-and-so." Who cares about what somebody else does? It isn't a matter of conditioning with God whatsoever. You go ahead and do it. You just live it; I don't care what they do; I don't care where they may go; I don't care how they may take it. You just live it. Nobody can impede you because even to the point of death—if you are threatened with death—you can still live it in kindness. And once you are gone, there isn't any more they can do with you anyway. Brethren, we have to learn those traits. There is no one who can block us. They can throw us in prison; they can threaten us; they can do every conceivable thing in life, but they cannot take from us the control of our own minds. We can think spiritually, or we can allow ourselves to be buffeted by our own carnality—whichever the case may be. But the real principle, brethren, is to learn to live it permanently. And would it not be marvelous to be able to look at human beings—which is a trait that one of these days is going to exist when we are born into that ultimate domain—with an element of permanency? These traits are not going to come and go, they are not going to be regulated by our experiences and circumstances. We are not going to be like that fluttering leaf—up and down. Not at all. We are going to be consistent. That's the thing with God. He is consistent—it is absolute, it is permanent, it never varies, it never changes. If we want the true character of God, that's what we have to see written into our lives.

And the scope of God's goodness is incomprehensible. As God writes those things within our lives, let's let it be incomprehensible with respect to ourselves. When people are truly, day by day, going to be surprised at how replete and full our goodness and our love can be for other human beings, for circumstances, and in responses to the stimuli of the needs of other people. Let's make it so absolute that people are going to be amazed at our ability to absorb, our ability to respond—to give. Let's let them talk about that rather than our ability to threaten, to retaliate, to manifest physical traits and characteristics.

And, then, in due time—as the Bible says—God will give us that praise and that honor and that glory. We shall be worthy of it when we have finally put on that nature by the power of God's Holy Spirit. Because the Bible says, "They *are* worthy." Let's become worthy. Let's recognize that we are not worthy now, but let's become worthy with the awesome power of God.

And of men who sing their own praises, beware. They haven't even begun. They don't even recognize what it is all about.

And, then, above all, as we found here in Hosea six and verse four, let's be consistent. That's the trait that really counts—that we can be trustworthy, that we are there always, and that God Himself can have that confidence in us. Not confidence in the human flesh—because we cannot achieve it through the human flesh—but confidence in that we have willed it and that we have the power of God's Holy Spirit to effectively fulfill it. If we will live that, brethren, we are going to be the recipients of all the blessings—the blessings of God that can come for the goodness of His Holy Spirit within us. Let's live it, brethren. And we truly have marvelous opportunities to manifest it in the horrible circumstances of this life.

Next time, brethren, we will begin a study on the word *tohv*, and I think you are going to find that one very interesting.