

What Are the Standards?

Going God's Way, Part 1

☑ **Target: Understand God's ways**

Key Verses

Colossians 3:2—Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Isaiah 55:8–9—“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Suggested Bible Reading

- Psalm 73
- 1 Corinthians 1–2

Other Recommended Reading

- Making Great Decisions (Get Activated! booklet)* [not yet published.]

Prayer and Praise: Gifts to Ask For

Give me, good Lord, a humble, lowly, quiet, peaceable, patient, charitable, kind, tender and pitiful mind, in all my works and all my words and all my thoughts, to have a taste of Your holy, blessed Spirit.

Give me, good Lord, a full faith, a firm hope, and a fervent charity, a love of You incomparably above the love of myself.

Give me, good Lord, a longing to be with You, not to void the calamities of this world, nor so much to attain the joys of Heaven, as simply for love of You.

And give me, good Lord, Your love and favor, which my love of You, however great it might be, could not deserve were it not for Your great goodness.

These things, good Lord, that I pray for, give me Your grace to labor for.

—Thomas More, 1478–1535

Meditation: Thoughts from the Lord on “The World and You”

Keep your hearts diligently. Be aware of what goes into your heart. Discern what you take in. Distinguish between the right and the wrong, the good and the bad, the evil and the loving. Closely follow the Word and guard your thoughts. For the Enemy of your heart and soul would devour you with his subtle lies and doubts and evil innuendoes. He knows that his time is short.



Are these not the Last Days? Have I not said that the love of many will wax cold and that there will be a falling away before My great return to gather you unto My bosom? Therefore seek not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Seek not the pattern and the fashion of this world. Do not compare yourself with that which is without, with the world and its ways. Seek not to conform to that which outwardly might appear lovely, but within is full of extortion, excess and wickedness. Be not deceived, for evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, if it were possible, even the very elect. But because of My elect, My chosen ones, these days shall be shortened and I will save you. A just man falls seven times and rises up again, but the wicked do fall into mischief.

(See 2 Timothy 3:1; Matthew 24:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 7:31; 2 Corinthians 10:12; Mathew 23:25; Luke 21:8; 2 Timothy 3:13; Matthew 24:4,22; Proverbs 24:16.)



Say not, "I am strong, I cannot be hurt. I am a believer, I cannot be deceived." For even the very elect shall be deceived if they do not stay tuned in to My voice.



<To think about> *Take a little time over the coming week to pray about and evaluate some area of your life—perhaps what you do for recreation, what music you listen to, what budget you have for clothing, and so on. On the basis of what you've seen in the Word, how do you measure up? Is there anything you need to change?*

Getting to Know the Bible: God's Ways vs. the World's Ways

- ❑ God's ways vs. the ways of man: Isaiah 55:8–9; 1 John 2:15–17.
- ❑ Discern (choose) between that which is of the Lord or not: Romans 12:9b; Job 34:4; Isaiah 7:15b; 1 Peter 3:11.
- ❑ Spiritual riches vs. material wealth: Ecclesiastes 5:10, 12, 19; 1 Timothy 6:10; Proverbs 28:16; John 6:27; Matthew 6:31–32; Mark 4:19; 8:36; Luke 12:15.
- ❑ God's economic plan—giving: Luke 6:38; Proverbs 11:24–25; 28:27; Acts 20:35b; Ecclesiastes 11:1; 2 Corinthians 9:6; Matthew 6:33.
- ❑ Trends and fads: Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 7:31; Colossians 2:8; Psalm 1:1; 90:17; 1 Peter 3:4; Proverbs 31:30; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20.
- ❑ God's guidance vs. media manipulation: 1 Samuel 16:23; Hebrews 5:14b; 2 Kings 17:15; Psalm 34:14a; 103:1; 119:37; Romans 12:2; Proverbs 15:21.
- ❑ Conflict resolution: Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1; 2 Timothy 2:24; Ephesians 4:32; Proverbs 10:12; 13:10; 16:29; 29:22; James 3:16.
- ❑ To serve or be served: Luke 22:24–27; Matthew 23:11–12.
- ❑ The wisdom from above: James 3:13,17; 1 Corinthians 3:19–20; Jeremiah 8:9; Psalm 14:1; Ecclesiastes 12:10–14.

Choosing God's Ways!

What do you value most?

What money buys

Money will buy:

A bed but not sleep.

Books but not brains.

Food but not appetite.

A house but not a home.

Medicine but not health.

Luxuries but not culture.

Amusement but not happiness.

Never satisfied

One of the richest men in the world, oil tycoon Paul Getty, was being interviewed in London. "If you retired now," asked a reporter, "would you say your holdings would be worth a billion dollars?" Getty paced up and down the room, mentally adding, "I suppose so," he said, "but remember, a billion doesn't go as far as it used to."

God's shovel

The story is told of a farmer who was known for his generous giving, and whose friends could not understand how he could give so much and yet remain so prosperous. One day a spokesman for his friends said: "We cannot understand you. You give far more than any of the rest of us, and yet you always seem to have more to give."

"Oh, that is easy to explain," the farmer said. "I keep shoveling into God's bin, and God keeps shoveling back into mine, and God has the bigger shovel."

Give now!

A rich man said to his minister, "Why is it everyone is always criticizing me for being miserly, when everyone knows that I have made provision to leave everything I possess to charity when I die?"

"Well," said the minister, "let me tell you about the pig and the cow. The pig was lamenting to the cow one day about how unpopular he was. 'People are always talking about your gentleness and your kindness,' said the pig. 'You give milk and cream. But I give even more. I give bacon and ham—I give bristles and they even pickle my feet! Still no one likes me. I'm just a pig. Why is this?' The cow thought a minute, and then said: 'Well, maybe it's because I give while I'm still living.'"

God's guidance vs. media manipulation

TV violence and values

The simplicity of the experiment at the day-care center and the starkness of the results stunned the parents.

When a class of two- to five-year-olds watched public television's big-hearted purple dinosaur, "Barney," they sang along, marched along, held one another's hands, and laughed together.

The next day, the same class watched the aggressive teenage avengers, "Power Rangers." Within minutes, they were karate-chopping and high-kicking the air—and one another.

"Even though the goal of these programs isn't to teach, our kids are learning because they're always learning," says David Walsh of the National Institute on Media and the Family, who conducted the experiment.

According to the National Television Violence Study, prime-time violence, on both broadcast and cable networks, has increased since 1994. The study also concluded that the way violence is portrayed

in most instances—glamorized, sanitized, and without negative consequences—poses a serious risk to children.

“These patterns teach children that violence is desirable, necessary, and painless,” says Dale Kunkel of the University of California at Santa Barbara, where the study was done.



Addressing a United Nations-sponsored conference on education in Melbourne, Ms. Diane Tilmann, an American educational psychologist, cited recent United States statistics on television viewing habits which found that the average 11-year-old had watched 10,000 murders on television.

Conflict resolution

God’s answer: Love, humility and prayer solve all problems.

The way of the world: violence, lying, aggression.

The two goats—a sample of humility

A man walking in the mountains observed this scene:

Two goats were making their way over a narrow path on the mountains. One was ascending the trail, the other descending. He also noticed that they must pass at a point where the trail was so narrow that there was room for only one goat. He watched to see what would happen.

The animals rounded a turn in the path which brought them in full view of each other. They backed up, as though ready for a lunge, and then the most amazing thing happened. The goat on the trail below laid down in the path, while the goat above him walked over his back. The first animal then arose and continued his journey up the trail.

“How do wars begin?”

A boy once asked, “Dad, how do wars begin?”

“Well, take the First World War,” said his father. “That got started when Germany invaded Belgium.”

Immediately his wife interrupted him. “Tell the boy the truth. It began because somebody was assassinated.”

The husband drew himself up with an air of superiority and snapped back, “Are you answering the question or am I?”

Turning her back upon him in a huff, the wife walked out of the room and slammed the door as hard as she could. When the dishes stopped rattling in the cupboard, an uneasy silence followed, broken at length by the son. “Daddy, you don’t have to tell me how wars begin. I know now!”

Some chilling stats

In the last 3,421 years of recorded history only 268 have seen no war. The twentieth century came to a close with a third of the world’s 193 nations embroiled in conflict. When the twentieth century began, the ratio of military to civilian casualties was 8:1. By the end of the century the ratio was 1:8.

The wisdom from above

The folly of science without wisdom

We have too many men of science, too few men of God. We have grasped the mystery of the atom, and rejected the Sermon on the Mount. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience.—General Omar Bradley

Our Amazing World!

Can you explain the watermelon seed?

“I am not so much of a farmer as some people claim,” said Hon. W.J. Bryan in his lecture on “The Price of Peace,” “but I have observed the watermelon seed. It has the power of drawing from the ground and through itself 200,000 times its weight, and when you can tell me how it takes this material and out of it colors an outside surface beyond the imitation of art, and then forms inside of it

a white rind and within again a red heart, thickly inlaid with black seeds, each one of which in turn is capable of drawing through itself 200,000 times its weight.—When you can explain to me the mystery of a watermelon, you can ask me to explain the mystery of God.”

Just six numbers...

In his newest book, *Just Six Numbers*, Martin Rees, Britain’s Astronomer Royal, argues that six numbers underlie the fundamental physical properties of the universe, and that each is the precise value needed to permit life to flourish. “These six numbers constitute a recipe for the universe.” He adds that if any one of the numbers were different “even to the tiniest degree, there would be no stars, no complex elements, no life.”

The six numbers lurk in the universe’s smallest and largest structures. To select one from the small end: The nucleus of a helium atom weighs 99.3 percent as much as the two protons and the two neutrons that fuse to make it. The remaining .7 percent is released mainly as heat. So the fuel that powers the sun—the hydrogen gas at its core—converts .007 of its mass into energy when it fuses into helium.

So what? Consider this: If the number were only a mite smaller—.006 instead of .007—a proton could not bond to a neutron, and the universe would consist only of hydrogen. No chemistry, no life. And if it were slightly larger, just .008, fusion would be so ready and rapid that there’d be no solar systems, no life.

The requisite number perches, precariously, precisely, between .006 and .008. And that’s just one of Rees’s six numbers. If you toss in the other five, life and the structure of the universe as we know it become unlikely to an absurd degree. Astronomer Hugh Ross has compared the state of affairs to “the possibility of a Boeing 747 aircraft being completely assembled as a result of a tornado striking a junkyard.”

The numbers’ uncanny precision has driven some scientists, humbled, into the arms of the theologians. “The exquisite order displayed by our scientific understanding of the physical world calls for the divine,” contends Vera Kistiakowsky, a physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

If each of the six numbers Rees has identified were dependent upon the others—in the same sense that, say, the number of arms and fingers in a family depends upon the number of family members—the fact that they allow for the existence of life would seem less of a shock. “At the moment, however,” says Rees, “we cannot predict any of them from the value of the others.” So each number compounds the unlikeliness of each of the other numbers.

The amazing Earth

If Earth were as small as the moon, the power of gravity would be too weak to retain sufficient atmosphere for man’s needs; but if it were as large as Jupiter, Saturn, or Uranus, extreme gravitation would make human movement almost impossible.

If we were as near to the sun as Venus, the heat would be unbearable; if we were as far away as Mars, we would experience snow and ice every night even in the warmest regions. If the oceans were half their present dimensions, we would receive only one-fourth the rainfall we do now. If they were one-eighth larger, our annual precipitation would increase fourfold, and this earth would become a vast, uninhabitable swamp!

Water solidifies at 32 degrees F above zero. It would be disastrous if the oceans were subject to that law, however, for then the amount of thawing in the Polar Regions would not balance out, and ice would accumulate throughout the centuries! To prevent such a catastrophe, the Lord put salt in the sea to alter its freezing point! (Psalm 104:24).

Nobel laureates testify of their faith

Surveys show that about 40 percent of scientists believe in God. Amongst the top scientists who have won the Nobel Prize, we find these opinions:

German physicist Max Born, who pioneered quantum mechanics, said, “Those who say that the study of science makes a man an atheist, must be rather silly people.”

American physicist Arno Penzias shared the 1978 Nobel Prize for discovering microwaves in space—patterns that physicists have interpreted as showing that the universe was created from nothing. Penzias said, “If I had no other data than the early chapters of Genesis, some of the Psalms and other passages of Scripture, I would have arrived at essentially the same picture of the origin of the universe, as is indicated by the scientific data.”

German-British researcher Ernst Boris Chain was awarded a Nobel Prize in medicine for his work with penicillin. Chain says, "The principle of [divine] purpose stares the biologist in the face wherever he looks. The probability for such an event as the origin of DNA molecules to have occurred by sheer chance is just too small to be seriously considered."

American physicist Arthur Compton discovered what we call the Compton Effect, relating to X-rays. He said, "For me, faith begins with the realization that a supreme intelligence brought the universe into being and created man. It is not difficult for me to have this faith, for an orderly, intelligent universe testifies to the greatest statement ever uttered: 'In the beginning, God.'"

William D. Phillips won the 1997 Nobel Prize in chemistry for using lasers to produce temperatures only a fraction of a degree above absolute zero. Phillips once quipped that so many of his colleagues were Christians he couldn't walk across his church's fellowship hall without "tripping over a dozen physicists."

Among Nobel laureates, there is a number who recognize the hand of God in the universe. In studying God's handiwork—His creation, which testifies of Him every day—these men and women have come to the conclusion that there must be a Creator.



If the good God were suddenly
To make a solitary blind to see
We would stand wondering all
And call it a miracle;
But that He gives with lavish hand
Sight to a million souls we stand
And say, with little awe,
He but fulfils a natural law!
—Huw Menai



"Posterity will some day laugh at the foolishness of modern materialistic philosophy. The more I study nature, the more I am amazed at the Creator."—Louis Pasteur, French chemist (1822–1895)



"How do you know whether there be a God?" was once asked of a Bedouin; and he replied, "How do I know whether a camel or a man passed by my tent last night? By their footprints in the sand." "The heavens declare the glory of God!" (Psalm 19:1).

Reflections: A Story of True Love

"Tell me who you love, and I'll tell you who you are."

John Blanchard stood up from the bench, straightened his army uniform, and studied the crowd of people making their way through Grand Central Station. He looked for the girl whose heart he knew, but whose face he didn't, the girl with the rose. His interest in her had begun thirteen months before in a Florida library. Taking a book off the shelf he had found himself intrigued, not with the words of the book, but with the notes penciled in the margin. The soft handwriting reflected a thoughtful soul and insightful mind.

In the front of the book, he discovered the previous owner's name, Miss Hollis Maynell. With time and effort he located her address. She lived in New York City. He wrote her a letter introducing himself and inviting her to correspond. The next day he was shipped overseas for service in World War II.

During the next year and one month the two grew to know each other through the mail. Each letter was a seed falling on a fertile heart. A romance was budding. Blanchard requested a photograph, but she refused. She felt that if he really cared, it wouldn't matter what she looked like.

When the day finally came for him to return from Europe, they scheduled their first meeting at 7:00 PM at the Grand Central Station in New York. "You'll recognize me," she wrote, "by the red rose I'll be wearing on my lapel." So at 7:00 he was in the station looking for a girl whose heart he loved, but whose face he'd never seen.

I'll let Mr. Blanchard tell you what happened:

A young woman was coming toward me, her figure long and slim. Her blonde hair lay back in curls from her delicate ears; her eyes were blue as flowers. Her lips and chin had a gentle firmness, and in her pale green suit she was like springtime come alive. I started toward her, entirely forgetting to notice that she was not wearing a rose. As I moved, a small, provocative smile curved her lips. "Going my way, sailor?" she murmured.

Almost uncontrollably I made one step closer to her, and then I saw Hollis Maynell. She was standing almost directly behind the girl. A woman well past 40, she had graying hair tucked under a worn hat. She was more than plump, her thick-ankled feet thrust into low-heeled shoes.

The girl in the green suit was walking quickly away. I felt as though I was split in two, so keen was my desire to follow her, and yet so deep was my longing for the woman whose spirit had truly companioned me and upheld my own.

And there she stood. Her pale, plump face was gentle and sensible, her gray eyes had a warm and kindly twinkle. I did not hesitate. My fingers gripped the small worn blue leather copy of the book that was to identify me to her. This would not be love, but it would be something precious, something perhaps even better than love, a friendship for which I had been and must ever be grateful.

I squared my shoulders and saluted and held out the book to the woman, even though while I spoke I felt choked by the bitterness of my disappointment. "I'm Lieutenant John Blanchard, and you must be Miss Maynell. I am so glad you could meet me. May I take you to dinner?"

The woman's face broadened into a tolerant smile. "I don't know what this is about, son," she answered, "but the young lady in the green suit who just went by, she begged me to wear this rose on my coat. And she said if you were to ask me out to dinner, I should go and tell you that she is waiting for you in the big restaurant across the street. She said it was some kind of test!"

It's not difficult to understand and admire Miss Maynell's wisdom. The true nature of a heart is seen in its response to the unattractive. "Tell me whom you love," Houssaye wrote, "and I will tell you who you are."