

Standard for Character and Conduct

In the area of moral/ethical or spiritual development, we recognize the freedom of each individual to develop under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. However, it must also be noted that each member should be growing in a manner that is consistent with the biblical pattern for a disciple of Jesus Christ, and that he is viewed by the community as a representative of this church and of Christ Himself (2 Cor. 5:20). Thus, it is essential that each exemplify a spirit controlled life in public and in private, conforming to the highest standards of conduct.

It should be noted that the standards of behavior for the believer are based on the Bible and are divided into at least three categories:

1. Those things that are commanded for every believer

It is commanded to love the brethren (John 13:35), to assemble for worship and fellowship (Heb. 10:25), to preserve the unity of the body (Eph. 4:1-3), to develop personal disciplines that will result in spiritual growth (2 Pet. 1:2-8), and to maintain the biblical pattern for marriage and family (Mal. 2:14-16; Eph. 5:22-6:4).

2. Those things that are expressly forbidden by the Scripture

It is a sin to practice all forms of immorality, impurity, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envyings, drunkenness, or carousing (Gal. 5:19-21). Christians must not marry a non believer, must not be fornicators, nor idolaters, effeminate, thieves, adulterers, covetous, drunkards, revilers, nor swindlers (1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14,15; 1 Cor. 6:9-10). It is a sin to murder those living and those who are not yet born. (Ex. 20:13; 21:22, 23; Ps. 139).

3. Those things that are seen to be inconsistent with a Christian lifestyle based on biblical principles.

A study of God's Word in the light of our culture leads to the conclusion that the distribution, sale, possession, and misuse of illicit drugs are not consistent with a spirit controlled life. It is expected that Christian responsibility will be exercised in the choice of all forms of entertainment.

In other areas, each believer needs to be sensitive to the manner in which the Holy Spirit would apply appropriate passages of Scripture to his life.

As we have entered into a covenant relationship with each other, then, we ought to have a growing desire, by the aid of the Holy Spirit:

- To strive for advancement in God's knowledge (2 Pet. 3:18), holiness (1 Pet. 1:16), and spiritual growth (Eph. 5:14-21);

- To support the church in its worship, teaching, discipline, government, and observance of the ordinances, which are believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper (Heb. 10:25; 1 Cor. 11; Matt. 28:19);
- To submit to those who have oversight of the body (Heb. 13:17);
- To participate cheerfully and regularly in the financial support of the ministry and the obligations of the church (1 Cor. 9:13,14; 2 Chron. 31:1-6);
- To walk together and to watch over one another in Christian love (1 John 3:14);
- To uphold one another in prayer and to aid each other during sickness and distress (Eph. 6:18; James 2:15,16);
- To cultivate a fellowship of Christian sympathy, slowness in taking offense, and readiness in seeking reconciliation (Eph. 4:31, 32);
- To maintain family and private prayer and study in the Scripture and to train our children to revere and seek His will for their lives through instructing and encouraging them in the Scriptures (Eph. 6:1-4; Prov. 22:6);
- To seek the salvation of family, relatives, and acquaintances; and to actively participate in the church's ministry of spreading the Gospel to all the nations (Matt. 28:18-20);
- To walk uprightly within our world as a Christian example (Eph. 4:17-32);
- To seek to understand and to exercise our spiritual gifts and to participate actively as an important member of this local church (1 Cor. 12);
- To study the Scripture and seek to understand, support, and follow its teachings (Acts 17:11).