



Oh Behave!

Proper Christian conduct is an absolute requirement if you ever expect to properly manifest your God-given, spiritual abilities. Recently, we've been talking about functioning in the Church, and the topic of proper behavior is a perfect accompaniment of that. Please refer to the February 2006 Artios for the teaching on Functioning in the Church. The seven Church Epistles are loaded with behavior topics, but one of the most aligned with functioning with your spiritual abilities is in Romans 12, beginning with verse nine.

Getting started

Let love [agape] be without dissimulation. Abhor that



which is evil; cleave to that which is good. (Romans 12:9)

The greatest manifestations of one's spiritual abilities can happen only when living according to agape.

This little Greek word means a whole lot of things, its primary onus being on Christian behavior. 1 Corinthians 13 lists all of the agape behavioral characteristics and I'd recommend reading through them just to refresh yourself on the topic again. If you

choose to live according to the agape lifestyle, and you also choose to manifest spiritual abilities in the Church, you must manage your agape lifestyle without hypocrisy. In other words, you must be really sincere in your Christian actions and behavior, making sure they always line up with God's Word. Another way to look at this is to make sure you don't pre-judge people, something which will prevent you from adequately serving them spiritually.

I love the next part of this verse. Once I learned what "abhor" really meant, I've never forgotten it. It means to, "shun." Quite literally, it means to, "shove away aggressively." Get any form of evil out and away from your life.

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Then cleave, its opposite, shows up. This means to, “stick like glue.” Can you imagine? *One aspect of your behavior is always on guard, ready at a moments notice to shove away any form of evil, while another aspect of your behavior is seriously set on “gluing” any and all forms of good, beneficial things, into your lifestyle!*

How you love others

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; (Romans 12:10)

We are the good guys folks. Our behavior is meant to exploit goodness, always endeavoring to bring and keep it at the forefront. Once you understand that you can't keep “switch-

hitting” with Christianity, you will easily fall into being a really wonderfully behaving Christian. *By switch-hitting, I mean, “acting like a Christian when it suits you, and acting in a non-Christian manner when it doesn't.”* I believe that we all can stand to grow a little in this area so please don't be offended if you think I'm picking on you. I'll let you do the picking, but in order to be able to do that, you must know the Biblical standard for how you are to behave while functioning with your spiritual abilities in the Church.

We are to be kindly affectioned with each other through brotherly love. Kindly affectioned means to “cherish fellow Christians.” That's easy, especially when you add the “how to” part. That's where brotherly love comes in. Man naturally has this kind of

“love ability” within him. He must choose to love others. What this is telling us is to add the phrase, “cherish fellow Christians” to our list of brotherly love characteristics. In other words, when you are being nice to people, be nice to Christians too. When you feed the poor, don't forget about fellow Christians who need food. When you clothe the needy, don't forget to clothe fellow Christians too. And the list goes on.

Making it even easier, as you love other Christians, make it a thing of honor by preferring them above yourself. It may be easy to think of yourself as someone great, but also think of other Christians as being great too! Make love a thing of honor.

What you do with your actions

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; (Romans 12:11)

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Slothful means, “tardy.” The word “business” isn’t supported by a Greek word meaning “business.” It is supported by a Greek word. It means, “brevity of time.” Together, they means, “don’t shirk your responsibility to get things done quickly, especially when it comes to your spiritual abilities. This leads right up to the next behavioral characteristic to demand of yourself to be fervent in spirit as you serve the Lord. Be zealous of spiritual things in your service. Believe it or not, many people are not zealous of spiritual things. They are more zealous of natural and material things. We need to change that. *Let’s all become highly zealous of spiritual things including how we behave while attending to our spiritual abilities.* That’s the right way to serve the Lord.

What you do with your mind

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation [mental pressures]; continuing instant in prayer; (Romans 12:12)

I’m sure we can all agree that hope, mental pressures, and prayers fall into the “mental” category of behavior. These all work harmoniously together. First you have the hope of the return of Jesus Christ. You can read about this in 1 Thessalonians. We all have the hope of the return of Christ to look forward to and we must demand of ourselves to constantly look to this great hope! Hope enables rejoicing. Those who are looking to the great Christian hope visibly show it by their abounding joy. *If you want a little more joy in your life, get a little more hope in there.* You’ll be surprised at the outcome. Imagine manifesting your spiritual ability as you are

rejoicing in hope? Why, even your neighbors won’t recognize you, and your co-workers too!

Tribulation refers to mental pressures. I know you might not have to deal with many, but I often have them. My favorite prayer is to live a stress-free live. No worries, no pressures. But I’ve got to tell you, I don’t think that’s possible. The very nature of our lives dictates pressure. This is because we have an enemy, an adversary. So, I manage my pressures by actively being patient. I force myself to be patient. How about you? Do you force yourself to be patient? Well, if you don’t, why not start now. It will certainly help you when manifesting your spiritual abilities. When you go to serve in the Church, instead of being a worrywart, you’ll be peaceful and patient. How wonderful!

Finally, another trait of behaving as a spiritually functioning Christian

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is to continue instant in prayer. This means that you are constantly diligent in your prayers. None of us want to be slackers when it comes to prayer, but especially when manifesting spiritual abilities in the Church. Pray all the time.

Taking care of others

Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. (Romans 12:13)

The first phrase in this verse refers to “abundant sharing.” This is the New Testament form of financial and material giving in the Church. You may be familiar with tithing, an Old Testament word. II Corinthians 8 and 9 teach abundantly on the subject of abundant sharing. *The bottom line here is you are to give freely and with happiness of your financial and material abundance in the Church.* Further the spread

of the Word of God and take care of other Christians by abundantly sharing.

How hospitable are you? How many strangers do you entertain? How many people do you invite into your home with the express purpose of caring for them, feeding them, warming them, clothing them, generally ensuring that they are taken care of according to their own needs? *If you are planning to get red hot on manifesting your spiritual abilities, you’ll need to hone up on this one. Be given to hospitality.*

What you give out to others

Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. (Romans 12:14)

Instead of maintaining a fighting spirit, maintain a “bless you” spirit.

Don’t say bad things about others. Even if you feel justified in doing so, saying something bad about or to another is the same as cursing them. Don’t do it. Say something nice or don’t say anything at all. This especially applies to those who seem intent on harming you. Trust in God and don’t fear what man can do unto you. God is a whole lot bigger than anything that can come up against you. Bless others as you set out to manifest your spiritual abilities, and never curse them.

How you interact with others

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. (Romans 12:15)

I love this. Now, don’t get me wrong. If I am not rejoicing, I doubt I’ll be able to rejoice with others. If you aren’t a “rejoicing” kind of person, you may have a tough time at this too. But, if the

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hope of the return of Jesus Christ is very alive within you, you WILL have rejoicing and you will be able to rejoice with others. ***God expects you to interact with Christians with rejoicing.*** So many people are soooooo down today. So many seem to have no joy, no love, no kindness, no good thing; almost. Well, we can change all of that. Bring rejoicing to them by introducing them to Jesus Christ, getting them focused on the hope of the return, and before long you all will be rejoicing together! By no means suppress the active Christian rejoicing of others. Rejoice with them.

How about those who are sad, crying, weeping for one reason or another? When you are manifesting your spiritual abilities in their presence, manifesting something that they need, get down on their level for awhile; don't hesitate. Just because you accommodate

their feelings doesn't mean that you too are sad. It means that you are taking care of them at their level. Before you know it, you'll have them up to your level of, guess what, rejoicing! Now, that's a great way to serve others, isn't it? The next verse confirms it even further.

How you position yourself with others

Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. (Romans 12:16)

Don't elevate yourself above another. ***The human mind is almost scary in that it seems to yank us out of reality and place us on a pedestal.*** God doesn't want any of us on a pedestal. We are all sons and daughters of God and we all have the same spirit of

Christ within us. We are to act like it mentally. That's what verse 16 is all about. Don't elevate yourself beyond what God has made you to be and above what He has provided for you. Always keep in mind that you are who you are and what you are spiritually because of God.

How to live among others

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. (Romans 12:17)

How easy it would be to be mean to a meanie, to be hurtful to a hurtler, to give bad back to someone who was bad to you. But God doesn't want you to be this way. He wants you to be honest and good with ALL people, not just Christians, but all people. ***When you are tempted to fight with someone, it may be the farthest thing from your mind, but you are to be good and***

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honest. That's right. God expects His people, filled with His godly abilities, to act this way and no other.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (Romans 12:18)

It usually is possible to live peacefully with others. I suppose to live like this may not be possible somewhere, sometime, but personally, I have NEVER come into this. *Even in my most trying of situations, inside or outside of the Church, a peaceful existence has been available.*

God always fought my battles for me, especially the ones I could not fight. I've never found a reason to let go of my peace. That's not to say that I haven't been tempted to let it go. God has always been bigger than any negative situation in my life. How about you?

Peacefulness is a behavior God expects us to maintain if we plan on getting really good with our spiritual abilities.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. (Romans 12:19-20)

If someone does something against you that deserves avenging, don't avenge yourself. I know. You say, but Jerry, what about all the movies that tout revenge, and you know, there are a lot of them? Yes, there are, but they are not our standard for truth. They are purely entertainment of a lesser sort. God WANTS to fight your battles for you. Let Him. Give place unto wrath and you'll witness greater

acts of revenge by God than your little ole mind could ever conceive. How do you give place unto wrath? By doing good things for bad people. Not everyone is bad, but the focus of these two verses is on how to deal with bad people. Feed him, give him drink, clothe him, and warm him. *God will take care of each and every situation for one reason – so that you can get on with manifesting your spiritual abilities.* Well, what are you waiting for? Get on with doing things His way and you'll clearly see what I am talking about.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21)

In a nutshell, don't allow evil to overcome you, but force yourself to overcome evil. Look within yourself. Do you have a war

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raging, one that never seems to calm down. Learn to accept who and what God has made you so that this war leaves your body. Then, get on with proper Christian behavior so that you can truly function in the Church. Don't kid yourself anymore. ***Stop telling yourself that you behave according to a Christian manner if you don't.*** Get serious about manifesting your spiritual abilities by getting serious about how you behave in and out of the Christian Church. Far too many of us have way too many internal conflicts. It's time to let them go so that the Church can grow. ***Take yourself down from your pedestal*** and put God's Word up there instead. Then, get busy doing what you do best, or at least, what you should be doing best. Manifest a wonderful, godly behavior while you are exercising your abilities in the spiritual realm!

God Bless you,

Jerry D. Brown