

“Given Over to Debasement”

INTRODUCTION: Every once in a while – 3 or 4 times per year – I get an anonymous letter in my home mail ...

1. They always have to do with *homosexuality*.
 - a) usually, stories about how God loves gays and lesbians ...
 - b) ... but also how Christians hate homosexuals.
 - c) They usually end with a plea like this: “*Pastor Ross, please consider how your lack of love for gay people is teaching your church how to hate.*”
 - d) Here’s the latest one I received in December: “*Hate a Queer for Jesus*”
 - (1) with the words “*Merry Christmas,*”
 - (2) and an artist depiction of the *Nativity*,
 - (3) and the reference: *Matthew 22:39*

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:39)
2. I don’t know from where they come. They are always anonymous. A **very cowardly** way to send a letter.
 - a) Lacking the *moral courage* to defend your views and beliefs by name.
 - b) An unkind form of dialogue, unwilling to discuss differences face to face.
 - c) Kind of like *hitting a person when their back is turned*.
3. I suspect these surely letters come from one of two sources:
 - a) **One of you** is upset with my moral position and my teaching on homosexuality. But more likely ...
 - b) They come from someone in my neighborhood who took exception to the sign I displayed in my yard 3 or 4 years ago, supporting the law against same-sex marriages in North Carolina.
 - c) *It was shortly after 3 such signs were stolen from our yard – all at night – and replaced with a 4th sign, that these mailings began.*
 - d) Whoever it is **I would love the opportunity to meet face to face, discuss this issue and pray together.**
4. “*Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.*” (Philippians 4:5)
 - a) I do not “hate queers for Jesus” because Jesus loves all people – straight and gays.
 - b) I do not “hate” gays because I too was an immoral man who has been redeemed.

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor. 6:11)

c) And I do not “hate gays or lesbians” because I preach against their sin but *for* their souls. I do believe their souls are worth saving and that the Good News of Jesus Christ is addressed to them, as it is to me.

(1) *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)*

(2) to the straight first, but also to the gay

(3) *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal. 3:28-29)*

(4) “neither heterosexual nor homosexual”

5. Whoever this is, whoever *you* are, be certain of this: *Your unjust characterization of both God's Word and the Church's stand on the issues of homosexuality are not only inaccurate (even untrue), but also purposefully twisted. You are defending and justifying what God condemns and from which He seeks to save us all.*

a) **not** merely homosexuals, gays, lesbians

b) **but rather** the sins of any sexual immorality.

6. **The Root Problem** is **not** that the Church (or the preacher) has failed to keep in step with the downgrade of public morals, but that our society has purposefully moved away from and contrary to the standards of God's holy scriptures.

7. The **moral slide** is both complicated and progressive; moving from actions, to passions, to mindset.

a) *dishonor ... degradation ... depravity ...*

b) *Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. (Romans 1:24 NASB)*

c) *For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, (Romans 1:26 NASB)*

d) *And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, (Romans 1:28 NASB)*

e) The progressive **moral slide** into destruction for all people who forsake God, His Christ, His Gospel-Word.

8. Please allow me to *review* Paul's logical argument in Romans 1:16-32. He begins with the righteousness of God and ends with the wrath of God.

a) First: The *Righteousness of God* is revealed in several ways:

(1) In the Gospel of Jesus Christ

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17)

(2) Note: “*In it (the gospel) the righteousness of God has been revealed.*” (Paul will tell us how in Romans 3:21-5:21)

b) Second: The *Righteousness of God* is also revealed in the Creation Order: The world God has made, even when men suppress this truth by their own unrighteousness.

(1) *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (Romans 1:18-20)*

(2) Key: “*So they are without excuse*” for not following God’s righteous order of His world.

c) Third: Mankind’s efforts to suppress this righteousness is motivated by their own *unrighteousness* (i.e., their sin)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. (Romans 1:18)

d) Fourth: Their main tactics in this unrighteous suppression of the Truth about the Righteous God are four-fold:

(1) Change gods: exchange God for idols

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. (Romans 1:21-23)

(2) Change stories: exchange Truth for the Lie

because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. (Romans 1:25)

(3) Change sexual orientation: exchange the natural for the unnatural

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. (Romans 1:26-27)

(4) Change society standards: exchange good for evil

Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:32)

- e) God reacts to this and reveals something in addition to His Righteousness: *His holy wrath*
- (1) *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, (Romans 1:18a)*
 - (2) **Charles R. Erdman:** *Romans; p. 36*
“The wrath of God” is a phrase which easily may be misunderstood. It must not be associated with any ideas of human passion or frailty or revenge. It must not make us unmindful of the universal love of God. It is in fact the reverse side of his love. It is the attitude against sin which a holy God must take as he sees how sin wounds and tortures and destroys the creatures who are the special objects of his care. God loves the sinner, but he hates and punishes sin.
 - (3) He punishes sin in order to save the sinner!
- f) God surrounds us with the natural consequences of our unnatural sins in order to bring us to our senses, and drive us back to Him for mercy, grace, deliverance.
- (1) *“God gave them up ...” (3 times)*
 - *dishonored bodies*
 - *degrading passions*
 - *depraved minds*
 - (2) **Charles R. Erdman:** *Romans; p. 36*
His wrath “is revealed,” not in the gospel alone or by any supernatural act but by what history shows of the degradation which results from sin, and the universal conviction of the race that sin is inevitably punished by pain and misery and death. This revelation is “from heaven,” the dwelling place and throne of God; by which is meant that this inseparable relation between sin and punishment is a divine arrangement. It operates as a natural law, but it is in accordance with a divinely established order.
- g) God’s message? When we forsake Biblical and Gospel Religion (*The Truth about God; v. 25*), then our morality plummets, bringing all manner of evil, pain and debasement upon us as human beings made in God’s Image.
- (1) Connection between morality and religion
 - (2) Connection between the worship of God and dignity of man
 - (3) Connection between Revealed Truth and realized lies.
 - (4) **Charles R. Erdman:** *Romans; p. 39*
Thus Paul intimates that morality depends upon religion, and cannot endure long without the sanctions of religion. Nor can anyone today neglect the worship of God without falling into the peril of evil thoughts and impure desires.

- h) Mankind simply **cannot** live happily, freely and in honor without the self-revealing God of the Bible, who is most clearly known in His Son, Jesus Christ. To turn from God to is embrace self-destruction.
- i) ... *The Righteousness of God revealed ... the wrath of God revealed ...*

9. **Charles R. Erdman's** summary of this sad process of human decline is astutely accurate:

- a) depravity ... immorality ... impiety go hand in hand
- b) **Charles R. Erdman:** *Romans; p. 40*

This willful impurity, springing from defiant impiety, forms together with it a more melancholy and vivid and detailed picture of the universal depravity of the heathen world than Paul furnishes in any other portion of his epistles.

- c) Impiety (*exchanging the glory of God for idols*) leads to immorality ...
- d) Immorality (*exchanging the truth about God for lies*) leads to indecency ...
- e) Indecency (*exchanging the natural for unnatural*) leads to insubordination ...
- f) Insubordination (*exchanging the Good for the Evil*) leads to life that is unbearable.

10. And it is to the *final phrase* of God's judgment that we turn to this morning ...

- a) Phase 1 – *The Dishonor of Heterosexual Immorality*

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. (Romans 1:24-25)

- b) Phase 2 – *The Degradation of Homosexual Immorality*

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. (Romans 1:26-27)

- c) Phase 3 - *The Depravity of the Human Mind*

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:28-32)

11. Romans 1:28-32 is one long sentence in the Greek, but it divides itself into 3 parts ...

- a) Set forth as such in the **ESV**

- b) The Judgement of the Debased Mind (v. 28)
- c) The Patterns of the Debased Mind (vv. 29-31)
- d) The Final Collapse of the Debased Mind (v. 32)
- e) *A Picture of a Debased Society (1:28-32)*

12. The sad picture of a debased society (Romans 1:28-32)

I. THE JUDGMENT OF GOD ON DEBASED SOCIETY (1:28)

1. *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. (Romans 1:28)*
2. **Charles Hodge:** *“Men should remember that their security from open and gross sins is not in themselves, but in God; and they should regard as the worst of punishments, his withdrawing from them his Holy Spirit.” (p. 45)*
3. *“God gave them up to a debased mind”* – notice three things in this verse (v. 28) ...
 - a) First: The direct object is *plural* but the indirect object is *singular*.
 - (1) i.e., God gave *them* up: “Them” means all the pagans in Roman society.
 - (2) indirect object: the singular *“debased mind”*
 - (3) *adokimos*: depraved, defiled, debased, reprobate, worthy of rejection; disqualified or “worthless.”
 - (4) This society is of *one mind* = the reprobate mind.
 - b) Second: The reason God gives them over to such a defiled mind is – once again – their rejection of Him.
 - (1) *“And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God ...”*
 - (2) Literally: *And as they did not think it worthwhile to retain God in their knowledge ...”*
 - (3) They did not think God was *worth* their while –
 - Did not pray to Him in public
 - Did not post His moral law in their courtrooms
 - Did not promote His standards as public policy
 - Did not build education around His revelation
 - Did not mention His name in “polite company”
 - Did not believe He is the only true God and only way to heaven, etc. ...
 - c) Third: God surrendered them to their own fate: *to do what ought not to be done*.
 - (1) i.e., to do things not becoming to the nature of man as a good and noble creature made in God’s image.

(2) **Douglas Moo:** *Romans: NICNT: p. 118*

Paul stressed that people who have turned from God are fundamentally unable to think and decide correctly about God and his will. This tragic incapacity is the explanation for the apparently inexplicable failure of people to comprehend, let alone practice biblical ethical principles.

- (3) doing shameful things but believing they are “cool,” sophisticated, enlightened or good for one another.
- (4) i.e., God’s judgment falls upon man’s rationale capacities; sinful man is unable to think straightly anymore, blinded by his own passions, confused by his own thoughts and disoriented by his own actions.

(5) **John Murray:** *Romans: NICNT; p. 49*

A reprobate mind is therefore one abandoned or rejected of God and therefore not fit for any activity worthy of approbation or esteem. The judgment of God falls upon the seat of thought and action.

- 4. Those things unfit for mankind, “*what ought not to be done,*” Paul now lists
 - a) not a comprehensive list
 - b) but a selective list of twenty evil deeds ...
 - c) The *patterns of behavior* of a debased society.

II. THE PATTERNS OF DESTRUCTION OF DEBASED SOCIETY (vv. 29-31)

- 1. *They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (Romans 1:29-31)*
- 2. Paul began his first section of Romans by stating:
 - a) *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. (Romans 1:18)*
 - b) “*unrighteousness of men*”
 - c) Now he describes that *unrighteousness*, in detail.
- 3. “*They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness ...* “
 - a) then follows 20 illustrations of this unrighteousness
 - b) in their hearts, their homes and their social connections
 - c) culminating in *unrighteous community standards*
- 4. Paul employs here a **vice list**.
 - a) Paul often includes **Virtue lists** in his epistles. For example:
 - (1) *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)*

- (2) *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (Col. 3:12-14)*
- (3) *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Phil. 4:8-9)*

b) And, usually, in contrast to these lists of virtues are his **Vice lists**

- (1) *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:19-21)*
- (2) *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. (Col. 3:5-8)*
- (3) *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 6:9-10)*
- (4) At least 12 Vice lists in his epistles.

c) This Vice list is different from most others: *It includes not the spiritual problem in the local church but rather the moral disorder in Greco-Roman (Pagan) society.*

d) It is very *similar* to the Vice list in 2 Timothy 3:1-5

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. (2 Tim. 3:1-5)

5. This Vice list defies any sort of neat classification. But there does seem to be a *general order* to these sinful patterns ...

a) I suggest an order that is *chiastic*: 4-5-2-5-4

b) First: 4 sins of general sins of moral disorder: “*They are filled with ...*”

(1) *unrighteousness*

- (2) *evil*
 - (3) *covetousness*
 - (4) *malice (wickedness)*
 - (5) Note: each ends with the Greek letters *-ia*
 - (6) **Thomas Schreiner**: “*to denote in a comprehensive way the wickedness of human beings*” (p. 98)
- c) Second: 5 sins that destroy *human relationships*: “*They are full of ...*”
- (1) *envy*
 - (2) *murder*
 - (3) *strife*
 - (4) *deceit*
 - (5) *maliciousness* (a second time!)
 - (6) **Grand R. Osborne**: “*desire to mistreat others.*”
- d) Third: at the center of the list two sins against reputation
- (1) *gossips*: telling true things you shouldn’t share with others
 - (2) *slanderers*: telling lies that should not be told.
 - (3) sins of the tongue deliberately aimed at destroying the good name and honorable reputation of others
- e) Fourth: 5 more sins that have to do with *rebellion*
- (1) *insolence*
 - (2) *haughtiness*
 - (3) *boastfulness*
 - (4) *inventing of evil*
 - (5) *disobedience to parents*
 - (6) 3 sins of pride; ingenuity in evil; contempt for authority.
 - (7) Root sins of pride, lawlessness and rebellion that undermine the very fabric of safe society
 - (8) **Leon Morris**: *Romans*; p. 98
- In a world which took seriously the obligation to honor one’s forbearers this was a grievous sin. It indicates a readiness to be false to those to whom one owes the most. It implies a lack of gratitude and a contempt for family authority.*
- f) Fifth and Final: 4 sins of *base human nature* (corruption)
- (1) note: they all begin with the Greek *a-* (not)

- *asunetous*: without insight into moral or religious things; foolish; “senseless” (foolish)
- *asunthetous*: without loyalty or faithfulness; not able to keep one’s word or one’s promises. (faithless)
- *astorgous*: without natural affection (*storgē*) for parents, children, family; emotionally stunted; (heartless)
- *aneleēmonas*: without pity, mercy, compassion or basic human sympathy. (e.g., The word is used by Greek writers of people who enjoy the death of gladiators, slaves and even children in the arena. (ruthless)

(2) **Frederic L. Godet**: *Romans*; p. 111

It refers not only to tender feelings within the family circle; here it calls up before the mind the entire population of the great cities flocking to the circus to behold the fights of gladiators, frantically applauding the effusion of human blood, and gloating over the dying agonies of the vanquished combatant. Such is an example of the unspeakable hardness of heart to which the whole society of the Gentile world descended.

6. Is this not the world we live in these United States of America? *Paul’s final point ...*

III. THE FINAL COLLAPSE OF DEBASED SOCIETY (v. 32)

1. *Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:32)*
2. Three final notes of judgment, condemnation and ultimate ruin –
 - a) First: They know in their hearts and minds that such things are wrong: *“Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die ...”*

(1) *What “decree”? Genesis 2*

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:15-17)

(2) *Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die. (Ezekiel 18:4)*

(3) *But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. (James 1:14-15)*

(4) *“The wages of sin is death ...” (Rom. 6:23)*

- b) Second: They continue in these deadly ways: *“... they not only do them ...”*
- c) Third: They teach their children, encourage their neighbors and build their institutions to foster such godlessness.

(1) “... *but give approval to those who practice them.*”

(2) *supporting social disorder*

(3) *building structural evil*

(4) *devising systemic injustice*

d) *The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. (Genesis 6:5-6, 13)*

3. Paul’s first major point is made: *Pagan society needs the Gospel of God and Salvation in Jesus Christ. Without both they are lost in their own sin and condemned by their own actions.*

4. Under this total spiritual, moral and social *collapse* only two options remain

a) The destruction under God’s righteous wrath

b) The salvation under God’s righteous Son!

Conclusion: How should you and I live as Christians in such a society?

1. Indeed, American society is now *pagan*; perfectly described in Romans 1:18-32. How else do you explain ...

a) Why Columbus, Ohio has gone on record to become *America’s Most Gay-friendly City*, but neglects the Church of Jesus Christ?

b) Why Charlotte, NC promotes transgender rights to any restroom but opposes your right to both moral order and the safety of your children in public restrooms?

c) Why we can’t pray in public schools but must read books like *Jennifer Has Two Daddies* (justifying same sex marriage to children)?

d) Why we justify the evil of our own political party but listen to “Talk Radio” as they slander and lie about the other party?

e) Why we get angry about the truth concerning *Climate Change, Immigration, Homosexuality, Pornography* or *Abuse in the family*?

f) Why someone would send a “Christmas Greeting” to a preacher of the Bible saying, “*Kill a Queer for Jesus*”?

2. *Woe to those who call evil good*

and good evil,

who put darkness for light

and light for darkness,

who put bitter for sweet

and sweet for bitter!

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,

and shrewd in their own sight!

Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine,

*and valiant men in mixing strong drink,
who acquit the guilty for a bribe,
and deprive the innocent of his right! (Isaiah 5:20-23)*

3. First: *We don't get angry and add the sin of our wrath and malice to the moral sewage flooding our culture.*

- a) Our anger cannot bring about godliness ...

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:19-21)

- b) God did not treat us with anger but with kind reason.

(1) *“Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool. (Isaiah 1:18)*

(2) *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? (Romans 2:4)*

(3) **We are called to kindness toward those who oppose God's law, hate our Gospel and vilify the Church.**

(4) Remember: *Many (most) of us were like that once!*

4. Second: *We live righteous, truthful, humble, kind and merciful lives. We can **never** call people to what we are not! Honesty about our own sins and earnest efforts to be Christ-like speak louder than words.*

5. Third: *We do not back down from the truth. We stay engaged with the unconverted. We remain humble but brave in the Truth of the Word. We share with people how God worked in our lives, and how He desires to work in theirs ... for good!*

6. Fourth: *We pray as we live, as we speak, as we believe.*

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

7. **Illustration:** The Campus Crusade girl on OSU's campus I made cry.

8. *though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. (1 Timothy 1:13-16)*

9. Be humble. Be kind. Pray. Reason with grace. Remember who you were when Jesus saved you!