

# **Special Committee on Membership Issues**

Report to the Bay View Board of Trustees  
Submitted by Barb Stonewater, Committee Chair  
September 12, 2012

## **I. Introduction and Background**

In the spring of 2012, the Board of Trustees of the Bay View Association decided to appoint a special committee, to deal with the issues around the membership process and requirements that had surfaced particularly in the summer of 2011. Though a vote of the Association on a specific amendment had determined to keep the current membership requirements in August 2011, it was clear that the issue would continue to be controversial, and potentially cause continued division among members, in part because 48% of those voting had supported the amendment for change. The Board hoped that this special committee could address some of the issues, help keep controversy at a minimum, and come up with a proposal that would be acceptable to the membership. The specific charge from the Board was: “The Board will form a committee, broadly representative of the community, to study a range of unresolved membership issues, including fair housing legal opinions, cottage ownership, and cottage succession, with the goal of advancing recommendations to the Board which will build consensus in the Bay View community.”

President Larry Ternan asked the two “sides” in the issue, those supporting more inclusion, and those wanting to retain the current system, to appoint three members each. He then appointed three “at large” members, along with a non-voting chair. The Board also asked John Beck, faculty member at Michigan State University and a Bay View resident, to serve as facilitator, even though he would not be in Bay View throughout the season. The committee was as follows:

Dick Crossland  
Don Duquette  
David Dykhouse  
Christine Lynch  
Carol Neithercut  
Barbara Merrell  
Peggy Child Smith  
Norm Wells  
Jack Wheatley  
Barb Stonewater, Chair

This report will provide an executive summary, give an overview of the process used to guide the discussions, provide recommendations for some new elements of the overall membership experience, and describe the status of the membership application process and requirements as of the end of committee deliberations on July 28.

## II. Executive Summary

The committee met seven times between June 16 and July 28, led by either John Beck or Barb Stonewater. The result of those discussions was a three-part membership process. The committee presents the following outcomes to the Board:

1. A recommendation that an **Orientation Committee** be appointed, as a subcommittee of the Membership Committee, to help ensure that all potential applicants for membership in the Bay View Association learn and understand Bay View's Christian history, values, and traditions, and its Chautauqua heritage. This committee would conduct a dialogue with each potential applicant, and provide a mentor for each. Further details are given later in the report. This is a strong recommendation to the Board which has committee consensus
2. A recommendation that a **Community (or member) Engagement Committee** be created, to help ensure that new members in particular, and in fact all members, understand their commitment to Bay View and to being engaged in some way in its activities and programs. This would involve an intentional welcome for new members and the selection of a sponsor for each, a collection of interests, skills, and talents to be used to involve a broader spectrum of members, and the use of technology to allow more members to stay involved. Again, more details are provided elsewhere in this report. This is a strong recommendation to the Board which has committee consensus
3. **Membership Application Process.** This process, as it is described here, had agreement in principle within the committee at the end of the July 17 meeting, with details to be worked out prior to the July 28 meeting. There was a consensus, or general agreement, at the end of that meeting, but within several hours, three committee members withdrew their support of the process. Consequently, while this process continues to have support of six committee members, there is no longer agreement of the entire committee.

The process that came out of the July 28 committee would have two tracks to membership:

- a. **Track One** – those affirming Bay View's Christian and Chautauqua history and traditions, and also Christian Values, along with additional specified letters of recommendation. There would be an as yet undecided limit on the percent of the overall membership that could come in under this track.
- b. **Track Two** – those affirming Christian persuasion, and providing a letter from the pastor of a church of which the applicant is a member or attends, along with additional specified letters of recommendation. (This is the same as the current membership process)

This Membership Application Process is forwarded as a report to the Board of the committee's work.

## III. Committee Process

At the committee's first meeting on June 16, facilitator John Beck introduced the group to the "interest-based approach to negotiations, conflict resolution, and problem solving." This process required the committee to focus not on their positions on any issue, but to instead look at the bigger picture. Consequently, committee members were asked to generate a list of **questions** that needed to be answered, **interests** that needed to be met, who cared (**stakeholders**) and then possible **options** for answering the questions and meeting the interests. The intent of this process was to identify the best option, or options, which best answered the questions and satisfied the most interests.

Over the process of the next two meetings, the committee generated a list of questions and interests, then agreed to a somewhat condensed list of both. Once those were finalized, a list of options was generated, and reviewed, with some options being eliminated. (One note here: three additional interests were suggested and added to the list.) During the remaining meetings, the various options discussed were compared, either explicitly or implicitly, to the essential questions and interests, to see if they answered the questions and met most of the interests. The exception to this was the membership application process and requirements that emerged from the final two meetings. Since the committee did not meet again after July 28, there was not a specific opportunity for that comparison. A complete list of the initial questions, interests, stakeholders, and options is attached to this report, as well as the final list of questions, interests, and possible options.

As the various options were discussed, what emerged was an three part membership process more encompassing and different from anything Bay View has had in place before. A "pre-membership orientation" process, as well as a "post-membership engagement/participation" process will be described in the next section.

#### **IV. Pre- and Post-Membership Process**

As these processes were developed, first in small subcommittees, then by the whole committee, it became clear that the committee was unanimous in its support of both a strong pre-membership orientation, and an ongoing post-membership involvement process. Consequently, the committee is forwarding this part of the report as a strong recommendation for implementation. **Though there are certainly details of both the pre-membership orientation and the post-membership engagement process to be worked out, all committee members felt like this approach would more strongly emphasize the Christian and Chautauqua heritage and traditions of Bay View, better ensure that potential members understand what Bay View is and how it differs from other summer resorts, and result in more members being involved in Bay View over their years here.**

##### Pre-membership orientation

The intent of the pre-membership orientation is to better ensure that those wanting to become Bay View members have a thorough understanding of the history and traditions of Bay View, as well as their ongoing responsibilities as members. To that end, the committee recommends an "**Orientation Committee**," possibly as part of the Membership Committee, which would be responsible for a required dialogue with each prospective member. Ideas for that dialogue include:

1. Pre-scheduled orientation meetings, or individual meetings
2. Each person to have a “mentor” familiar with Bay View and the orientation process
3. Specifics would depend on how much and what kind of background the prospective member has with Bay View, and would focus on benefits of Bay View as well as responsibilities
4. Would happen prior to any negotiations on cottage purchase
5. Could result in people “self selecting” in or out of Bay View

Other ideas related to the pre-membership process included a **new membership category, called for now “Friends of Bay View”** (another name is needed, so as not to confuse with Friends of Performing Arts). The new group could give Bay View an **additional source of income**, through a “Friends” fee, in exchange for perhaps reduced prices or preferential seating for various Bay View events. This could also be an **expanded source for communications** as well as **fund raising**. There would be no requirements for this category.

The committee felt the Associate member category should stay in place, primarily for those interested in becoming lease holding members or those who are former lease holding members. Currently, Associate member is the only option for those wanting to be connected to Bay View in some way. The “Friends” category might fill some of that need.

#### Post-membership involvement process

The intent of the post-membership process is to ensure that all new members feel welcome, to help them understand the many opportunities for involvement, and hopefully to increase their commitment to and engagement in Bay View over their lifetimes. It would also help existing members become more involved, which is a critical part of ongoing Bay View success. The recommendation is that a **“Community Participation Committee”** be created to be responsible for this process. Some of the ideas that this committee might be responsible for include:

1. Create a kind of “welcome wagon” approach to reach out to new members
2. Develop a sponsor process, where each member, regardless of their previous experience with Bay View, would have a sponsor
3. Periodically host a newcomers’ reception, to help members feel welcome, discuss opportunities for involvement, and emphasize the meaning of “living in community”
4. Create an annual “reaffirmation” process, where all members have the opportunity to recommit to Bay View’s Christian history, traditions, programs, and the pillars of our Chautauqua
5. Develop a way to determine talents, skills, and interests of new members (in fact, all members), and create a system for keeping track of such data. This could be used to intentionally engage a greater number of Bay View members in various initiatives and programs
6. Use technology to better engage members by:
  - a. Using teleconferencing or Skype to allow members to participate in committees or other conversations when not on the grounds

- b. Address needs of telecommuters, such as making office space available on campus for a small fee, which would allow those needing to work the chance to stay on campus, and perhaps spend more time in Bay View
7. Address renter issues
- a. Possible renters' reception, particularly for those in Bay View for an extended time
  - b. Create a new renter packet and make it available to leaseholders before they rent and to all renters
  - c. Focus on the responsibility of leaseholders for their renters and emphasize that they are "renting a community," not just a cottage

### Summary

Though there are certainly many details to be worked out with the pre-membership orientation and the post-membership involvement process, the committee felt strongly that both of these would greatly improve the entire membership experience and forward them as recommendations to the Board.

### **V. Membership Application Process and Requirements**

The membership application process had been discussed in general as part of the overall process at earlier meetings, but was focused on specifically at the July 17 meeting. A subcommittee had developed an outline, which was presented to the whole group. The subcommittee had worked with several assumptions, based on earlier committee conversations and decisions. Those included:

1. The current Membership Committee would manage the pre-membership orientation and the membership application process
2. A mentor would guide the applicant through the orientation and application process
3. A committee for community/member participation would be created
4. Membership would be split between members who affirm Christian values and those who affirm Christian faith, with those affirming Christian faith maintaining a majority. (This had been discussed at a previous meeting)
5. Legacies would not be treated differently (also decided at a previous meeting)

The first part of the subcommittee's recommendation, which had been discussed previously, was a recommendation that an online questionnaire be given to each applicant, to familiarize them with Bay View's traditions and history, programs and activities, and how to get information. This would not be something an applicant would "fail," as the applicant would be given whatever time or assistance needed to find the appropriate answers. This questionnaire was supported by the entire committee, and did not generate much additional discussion.

After thorough discussion at the July 17 meeting, the committee had outlined an application process that had two "tracks", or paths, to membership. (It should be noted here that one committee member did not attend the July 17 meeting, and attempted to send an email expressing some concerns to the chair after that date, but the chair did not receive the email.)

**Track One**, which would be limited to some specific percentage of the overall membership, would require the applicant to **affirm a set of Christian values**. The committee discussed various percentages, ranging from 15%-49% of the overall membership, who could come into Bay View through the Christian values track. They also discussed the wisdom of a “trigger point,” or a percentage less than the maximum percentage that would “trigger” an automatic review of the membership application process by the Board. The possibility of a required Board review after a certain number of years was also discussed. The intent of these percentages, and the “trigger point” was to allow some change, but “controlled change.” The notion of any change having some controls, and review, was very important in the discussion of an alternative track.

**Track Two** would require an **affirmation of Christian faith**. The suggestion was made that either just those going through the Christian values track, or all applicants, would also be asked to affirm Bay View’s traditions and Christian values.

**All applicants, regardless of membership track, would also be asked to submit additional letters of recommendation.**

The committee was divided into three groups to work on details before the next meeting on July 28. One subgroup would work on the process of affirming Christian faith, and the other on the process of affirming Christian values and the history, traditions, and pillars of Bay View. The third group would create a flow chart (attached to this report) to illustrate the membership application process.

During the final meeting on July 28, which was facilitated by John Beck in Barb Stonewater’s absence, the committee discussed details of the proposed “two-track” membership application process. The plan that was discussed, based on the work of the two subcommittees, was as follows:

**Track One – Applicants would be asked to affirm Bay View’s Christian heritage and mission and Chautauqua programs, and also to affirm a statement of Christian values (attached to this report), along with specified letters or recommendation.**

**Track Two – Process would be the same as the current process, with applicant asked to affirm Christian persuasion and provide a letter from the pastor of a church of which the applicant is a member or attends, along with other specified letters of recommendations.**

There was a great deal of discussion of the details of these two tracks, and of percentages (which were at time referred to as “quotas”). The meeting lasted four hours, and hour and a half beyond the expected end time. Prior to adjournment, facilitator John Beck asked each member present whether they agreed with membership application process described above. (Note: one member had left the meeting at the end of the specified meeting time). The eight remaining members indicated their general agreement, though no formal vote was taken. After the meeting, the member who left indicated to the chair that she supported the plan.

It appeared that after many hours of difficult work and discussion, and genuine efforts to come together, that the committee had reached a consensus, or general agreement. However, within several hours after the meeting, three members withdrew their support for the agreed upon process. Many of the specifics, such as percentages of members coming through the Christian values track, “trigger points,” and comparison to the questions and interests, were not completed, though there was some tentative agreement that no more than 15% of the membership would come through Track One, and that a Board review would be required sometime prior to that point. (Note: because this is not a finished product, there are some inconsistencies between the attached flow chart and this narrative.)

Since this plan no longer has support from all members of the committee, this report of our work on the membership application process comes to the Board as a report, with continued support of six of the nine committee members.

## **VI. Post July 28 Committee Efforts**

After the July 28 meeting, the chair talked with each member of the committee, to determine if there was any way to get agreement on any application process, but determined that it was not possible. Consequently no additional meetings of the committee were held. Some of the six members who supported the plan described above were willing to come back together, as were the three who withdrew their support, but it was clear that there was no way to reach agreement. The three who no longer support the membership application process described here have indicated that they would be willing to come back into a discussion about an alternative path to membership available only to legacies. However, many others on the committee are not willing to do so, since that issue was discussed in an earlier committee meeting, the decision was made not to treat legacies differently, and they are not willing to revisit that issue at this point.

We have attempted in this report to provide the substance of the committee’s discussions over the six weeks of meetings. If Board members are interested in other details, please contact Barb Stonewater, Chair, and additional information will be provided if available.

Barb Stonewater, Committee Chair

**Special Committee on Membership Issues**  
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**Additional Documents**

**Complete list of Questions, Interests, Options**

*If membership thresholds/criteria are the answer, what are the questions?*

**Complete list of questions:**

- Why is it important to have pastor recommendations?
- What is BV's history? Should we (how do we) continue those traditions and history?
- How do we find people who uphold the bylaws, articles of incorporation, governance, and mission?
- How do we add new people who "get" BV, carry on tradition, and will continue to make it a unique place?
- How do we play out our Christian heritage?
- How does BV respond to shifts because of population shifts pertaining to religion?
- What kinds of people do we want in BV?
- How do we keep BV a special place and not let it become just another summer community?
- BV → 3-legged stool (religion, recreation, education). Religion is fundamental. How do we make sure we don't lose a stool leg?
- How do we get people to BV who "get" BV, and who understand and want to live by its values?
- Why do we have them? (membership criteria)
- How do we maintain levels of participation, level of support of organization and values?
- How do we perpetuate our membership in a way that supports the mission?
- How do we respond to and reflect changes in society?
- How do we make sure people are committed to BV and its mission?
- How do we "screen" people for BV?

**Who are the stakeholders? (people who have something to gain or retain; people who have something to give or not give)**

- **Who cares – stakeholders; What do they care about – interests**

**Stakeholders**

- Current lease holding members
- Associate (non-lease holding) members
- Potential members
- Program directors and staff employees
- Families of current members
- General community (broader public)
- Governmental units (local)
- Law enforcement
- Committees

- Other Chautauqua communities
- Attending, participating, supporting public
- Board of Trustees
- Music students
- Former lease holders
- Founders of BV
- Children of BV owners
- Methodist church

### **Interests**

- Continued existence of Bay View
- Ability to inherit
- BV's ability to fundraise → to provide stable economic base
- Property value
- Climate embracing and allows for expression of Christian life
- Having many and vast opportunities – religious, educational, recreational – to engage in and experience
- Financial prudence
- Being part of a community that reflects shared values and challenges self to be better
- Tolerant, welcoming process
- Ability to sell cottages
- Opportunities to serve and volunteer
- Willing volunteers
- Church attendance at BV
- Vibrancy of program attendance
- Peace of mind and comfort
- Safety
- Gracious community
- Consistent with the law (compliance)
- Meet a higher standard of justice
- Maintaining a sense of “home”
- Ease of membership
- Clear process for membership
- Civility and minimum of conflict
- Friendships – having a place to come back together
- Ability to retain those friends
- Ability to debate and discuss with a spirit of civility
- Durability – able to be sustained
- People will continue to “share the load” participation and support
- Flexibility – able to endure as demographics change
- Objective, verifiable, and reproducible – can be applied evenly and consistently
- Reflects the intangibles of “getting” BV
- Reasonable and differential expectations of contributing to BV
- Non-judgmental
- Diversity and variety – “buffet”
- Differential contribution over the span of one's life and membership
- Keep standards and values that ensure BV's spirit of community
- Be flexible to keep families in BV

- Fairness and even-handedness
- Welcoming
- Not overburden membership committee
- Being member cannot be professional liability

## Options

- Change membership criteria
  - Affirms Christian heritage
  - Affirms BV traditions
  - Commits to active support of these two things
  - No test/requirement of membership in a church
- Membership process that conveys BV's values, community → would yield self-selection
- Continually “put in front of people” options to participate
- Strengthen sponsorship/mentorship of new members
- Handling legacies differently
- Change membership criteria (individual no longer required to be member of church) but majority must be Christian
- Potential members meet with leader of each “pillar” to explain “buffet” and ways to participate
- Membership requirement to be
  - Of Christian persuasion
  - Have someone verify
  - Pastor of church you attend or are member of says you're of “good character”
- Allow current lessees to pass lease to children, no questions asked
- Profess Christian faith upon membership
- During membership process (strengthen), ask more questions of applicant's purpose and interests to ascertain whether they “get” BV
  - Supporting letters
- Require people to reaffirm membership
  - Include letters – how has this person supported BV?
- Streamline bylaws – less “gotcha” rules
- Residency requirement – rent before you buy
- Have a membership “track” that includes sponsor, participation
- Create two types of membership
  - Cottage and voting
  - Cottage
- Board of Trustees could not enforce
  - Christian persuasion
  - Recommendation from pastor of church
- Celebrate current members and volunteers
- More outreach to current members

## **Final Questions, Summary of Interests, and Options**

### **Questions**

- How do we ensure that BV members are committed to participation and support of the mission, program, and continued existence/vibrancy of BV?
- How do we support and live out our Christian heritage?
- How do we build and perpetuate a membership who “get” BV, are committed to carry on the traditions of our history and pillars of our mission, and will ensure that BV remains a unique community?

### **Interests**

**Membership Process.** There are interests in a solution which:

- Allows ease of membership
- Defines a clear process for membership that is objective, verifiable, and reproducible, allowing it to be applied fairly and consistently.
- Is durable and does not require frequent revisiting
- Is flexible
- Reflects the intangibles of "getting" BV and yields new members who do
- Perpetuates the retaining of families within BV over time
- Does not overburden the membership committee
- Is open and welcoming and emphasizes the positives - "looking to say yes"
- Concern that Bay View could become secular

**Protects and strengthens the Bay View Experience.** There are interests in a solution which:

- Perpetuates a climate embracing and allowing for expression of Christian life, with indicators of its strength like church attendance
- Ensures there is a "buffet" of experiences – religious, educational, recreational – to engage in and serve in and that these programs are vibrant and supported
- Perpetuates Bay View as a community of shared values that challenges individuals to be better selves – helps us to be a gracious community
- Retains the peace of mind, comfort, and safety of Bay View
- Support the initiation and maintenance of friendships
- Creates reasonable and differential expectations of contributing to BV, from individual to individual and over the course of one's life
- Maintains the spirit of Bay View as "home"
- If different faiths were welcome to Bay View, there could be a need to provide additional religious activities
- It could put a singular worship service at risk

**Ensures Bay View's long term institutional strength and legacy.** There are interests in solutions which:

- Allows the ability to inherit
- Ensures BV's ability to fundraise through members
- Retains and strengthens property value and the ability of members to sell their cottages
- Ensures Bay View's financial prudence and economic viability and vitality
- Strengthens and retains involvement including volunteerism, church attendance,

program participation

- Is compliant with the law and protects Bay View from legal action
- Meets a higher standard of justice, beyond the letter of the law
- Demonstrates civility and the minimum of conflict
- Protects Bay View members from professional liability
- Ensures Bay View members will continue to "share the load" in participation and support.

## **Options**

Options remaining on the list:

- Ask more questions/request more letters in membership process to determine applicant's purpose and interests to ascertain whether they "get" Bay View
- More outreach to current members
- Board not enforce Christian persuasion requirement and letter from pastor
- Create 2 types of members - property only, property and voting
- Develop a membership track that includes sponsorship and participation
- Require applying members to profess Christian faith upon membership
- Handle legacies differently
- Strengthen sponsorship/mentorship of new members
- Continually put in front of people their options to participate, volunteer, get involved
- Develop membership process that begins with a dialogue that conveys Bay View's values and community and overall process conveys Bay View's mission
- Change criteria:
  - Affirm Christian heritage of Bay View
  - Affirm BV's traditions
  - Pledge to active support of these
  - No test/requirement of membership in a church
- Potential members learn about the buffet of options
- Retain status quo - identify as being of Christian persuasion, verified, and letter from pastor saying of "good character"
- Change membership criteria for individuals but majority of membership must be Christian

## **Statement of Christian Values**

### **1. The only thing worthy of worship is God.**

In today's world, many things compete against God for our devotion. These are some of the things that can become modern-day idolatry if we let them become too important to us:

- Excessive attention to material things such as houses, cars, clothes, jewelry, physical appearance, entertainment, etc.
- Pursuit of wealth, power, fame, pleasure or status
- Excessive devotion to self, job, hobbies, country, ideologies, heroes, leaders, even family.

**Bible references:** [1 Samuel 15:23](#), [Matthew 6:31-34](#), [22:34-40](#), [Mark 12:28-31](#), [Luke 10:25-28](#), [Acts 14:11-15](#), [1 Corinthians 10:14](#), [Galatians 5:19-21](#), [Ephesians 5:5](#), [Colossians 3:5](#), [Philippians 3:18-19](#), [1 Timothy 6:6-11](#), [6:17-20](#), [2 Timothy 3:1-5](#), [Hebrews 13:5](#), [1 Peter 4:1-6](#)

**Other references:** [Love the Lord Your God](#), [What does the Bible say about money and wealth?](#), [Wealth](#)

## 2. Love and Respect all people

After saying "Love the Lord your God" is the most important of the commandments, Jesus continued:

**“The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these.”**

The English word "love" has many different meanings, but the Greek word, *agape*, used in the New Testament, is commonly known as "Christian love." It means respect, affection, benevolence, good-will and concern for the welfare of the one loved.

In His *Parable of the Good Samaritan*, Jesus made the point that we should extend our Christian love to *all* people of the world, regardless of race, religion, nationality or any other artificial distinction. We must practice that Christian love even toward our enemies!

Jesus' Golden Rule is, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." We should not say or do anything unless we can answer "Yes" to the question, "Would I want that said or done to me?" Neither should we fail to do the good things we would expect of others.

**Bible references:** [Leviticus 19:18](#), [Matthew 7:12](#), [22:34-40](#), [Mark 12:28-31](#), [Luke 6:31](#), [10:25-28](#), [John 13:34-35](#), [Romans 13:8-10](#), [15:1-2](#), [James 2:8](#)

**Other references:** [Love Your Neighbor as Yourself](#), [What are the Greatest Commandment and the Parable of the Good Samaritan?](#), [What Does the Bible Say About Love?](#)

## 3. Be humble

Humility or being humble is a quality of being courteously respectful of others. It is the opposite of aggressiveness, arrogance, boastfulness, and vanity. Acting with humility does not in any way deny our own self worth. Rather, it affirms the inherent worth of all persons. Humility is exactly what is needed to live in peace and harmony with all persons. It dissipates anger and heals old wounds. It allows us to see the dignity and worth of all God's people. Humility distinguishes the wise leader from the arrogant power seeker.

**Bible references:** [Matthew 5:5-9](#), [20:25-28](#), [Mark 9:35](#), [1 Corinthians 10:24](#), [Ephesians 4:1-6](#), [Philippians 2:2-8](#), [2 Timothy 2:22-25](#),

**Other reference:** [Humility](#)

## 4. Be honest

Honesty and integrity are held as very important values throughout the Bible, and any deception to gain an advantage or harm another is prohibited by the Ten Commandments and other Bible passages. Deception may be by false statements, half-truths, innuendo, or failing to tell the whole truth. It is all too common in advertising, business dealings, politics and everyday life. We must strongly resist the temptation to engage in any form of theft, cheating, deception, innuendo, slander or gossip.

Rationalization is a form of self-deception by which we convince ourselves that sinful actions are justified in order to achieve a good result, but this is really just another form of dishonesty. Holiness is in *living* by the commandments, not in achieving an end result. In Biblical teaching, the ends *do not* justify the means!

**Bible references:** [Exodus 20:15](#), [Leviticus 19:35-36](#), [Deuteronomy 16:19-20](#), [25:13-16](#), [Psalms 15:1-5](#), [24:3-5](#), [Proverbs 10:9](#), [11:1](#), [11:3](#), [12:22](#), [16:28](#), [19:1](#), [20:10](#), [24:28](#), [28:6](#), [28:20](#), [Isaiah 33:15-16](#), [Zechariah 7:9](#), [Mark 10:19](#), [Luke 3:12-14](#), [16:10-12](#), [2 Corinthians 4:1-2](#), [2 Corinthians 7:2](#), [2 Corinthians 8:21](#), [Ephesians 4:25](#), [Philippians 4:8-9](#), [Colossians 3:9](#), [Hebrews 13:18](#), [1 Peter 2:12](#), [3:10](#)

## 5. Live a moral life

We often think of morality in terms of sexual sins, but according to Jesus, sins such as slander, greed, deceit, and arrogance are equally immoral.

**Bible references:** [Exodus 20:1-17](#), [Matthew 5:27-28](#), [15:18-19](#), [Mark 7:20-22](#), [10:11-12](#), [Romans 13:11-14](#), [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#), [Galatians 5:16-26](#), [Ephesians 5:1-7](#), [Colossians 3:5-10](#), [1 Thessalonians 4:3-9](#),

## 6. Be generous with time and money

The Bible tells us to share generously with those in need, and good things will come to us in turn. Each of us has something to offer to someone in need. We can give our money and our time to charity, be a friend to someone who is sick or lonely, do volunteer work or choose a service-oriented occupation. We may give unselfishly of our time to our spouse, children or parents.

**Bible references:** [Leviticus 19:9-10](#), [25:35-38](#), [Deuteronomy 15:7-11](#), [Proverbs 14:21](#), [28:27](#), [Isaiah 58:10-11](#), [Matthew 5:42](#), [6:1-2](#), [25:31-46](#), [Luke 6:38](#), [12:33](#), [21:1-4](#), [Acts 20:35](#), [Romans 12:6-8](#), [2 Corinthians 9:5-7](#), [Hebrews 13:1-3](#), [13:15-16](#), [1 Timothy 6:17-19](#), [1 John 3:17](#),

**Other references:** [What does the Bible say about Generosity and Duty to the Poor?](#), [What Does the Bible Say About Using Time, Talents and Wealth?](#), [What does the Bible say about Money and Wealth?](#)

## 7. Practice what you preach; don't be a hypocrite

If there was any one group of people that Jesus couldn't stand, it was hypocrites! The Pharisees of Jesus' time were a religious and political party that insisted on very strict observance of Biblical laws on tithing, ritual purity and other matters. At the same time, many of the Pharisees forgot the true spirit and intent of the law and became self-indulgent, self-righteous, snobbish, and greedy.

It is not the things we say that really matter; it is the things that we do. If we claim to be Christians but do not let Jesus' teachings guide our lives, we are nothing but hypocrites.

**Bible references:** [Psalms 50:16-17](#), [Isaiah 29:13-15](#), [Jeremiah 7:1-11](#), [Micah 3:11-12](#), [Matthew 6:1-7](#), [7:1-5](#), [7:21-23](#), [15:7-9](#), [23:1-33](#), [Luke 20:46-47](#), [Romans 2:21-24](#), [James 1:22-27](#), [2:14-24](#), [1 John 1:5-7](#), [2:3-6](#), [2:9](#), [4:19-21](#)

## 8. Don't be self-righteous

No one is perfect; we are all sinners in one way or another. Living a moral life means taking responsibility for controlling *our own* behavior. If we say or even think we are better than people we consider to be "sinners," we are guilty of the sin of self-righteousness. It is not our right to look down on, criticize, judge, condemn, or try to control other people. Judgment is to be left to God.

This does not deny the right of governments to maintain law and order and collect taxes. Jesus and other New Testament leaders supported the authority of civil governments.

**Bible references:** [Proverbs 26:12](#), [Isaiah 5:21](#), [Matthew 7:1-5](#), [9:10-13](#), [18:10](#), [Luke 6:32-42](#), [7:36-50](#), [18:9-14](#), [John 8:1-8](#), [Romans 2:1-4](#), [3:23](#), [14:1](#), [14:10-12](#), [1 Corinthians 4:5](#), [13:1-7](#), [16:14](#), [Galatians 6:1-3](#), [James 2:12-13](#), [4:11-12](#), [1 John 1:8](#)

## 9. Don't hold a grudge

Jesus said there is no place for hatred, holding a grudge, revenge, retaliation or getting even in the life of a Christian:

Bearing a grudge and seeking revenge are *never* appropriate responses to a perceived wrong. A grudge destroys the grudge-holder with bitterness, and revenge only escalates hostilities. Jesus told us we must reconcile with our adversaries, forgive their transgressions, and let go of the anger that may tempt us to commit an act of revenge.

**Bible references:** [Leviticus 19:18](#), [Psalms 37:8-9](#), [Proverbs 10:12](#), [12:16](#), [15:1](#), [15:7](#), [19:11](#), [20:22](#), [24:29](#), [Matthew 5:21-26](#), [5:43-48](#), [Romans 12:17-21](#), [1 Corinthians 6:7-8](#), [Ephesians 4:26](#), [4:31-32](#), [Colossians 3:7-8](#), [James 1:19-20](#), [1 Thessalonians 5:15](#), [1 Peter 3:9](#), [1 John 2:9-11](#), [4:19-21](#)

## **10. Forgive others**

God is merciful and forgives our sins and failings. In the same way, we must be merciful and forgive other people who sin against us or do us harm.

**Bible references:** [Matthew 5:7](#), [18:21-35](#), [Mark 11:25](#), [Luke 17:3-4](#), [Colossians 3:12-14](#), [Ephesians 4:32](#)