

# The Lutheran Church: Concerns and Suggestions

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## Concerns

- *the downside*

1. **The Old and New Testaments involve two separate audiences.**
  - The Old Testament chronicles God's covenant with the Jews.  
e.g. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."
  - The New Testament presents the road to salvation that Jesus offered everyone else.  
e.g.. "Turn the other cheek." *Old Testament Christians* is an oxymoron.  
(Revelation would be more easily grasped if it were the last book of the Old Testament.)
2. **The purely Biblical orientation ignores changes over time, and non-linearities.**
  - e.g. "Be fruitful and multiply." We were; we did. Others did too. Earth is finite.
3. **Human reporting "after 300 A.D." deserves more serious consideration.**
  - Given the gift of the holy spirit, why would all prophesy have ceased so long ago?
  - In humility, it is not a sin to think.
4. **The focus is way too much on the negative.**
  - Laws highlight the un-permitted pleasures, but where is  
"The guide to the permitted pleasures?"
    - a. Denial of the beauty of creation.
    - b. Inadequate self-restraint training. The motto might be:  
*"If I like it, I deserve to own it. Therefore, in most cases, I'd better not like it."*
5. **What is the model of Christian discipleship supposed to be today?**
  - no noticeable percentage of Christians leave their boats and fishnets behind.
6. **The "sharing" model is scores of years out of date, and rapidly aging.**
  - "Giving away " one piece can shut down a production line.
  - Most curiously, shared knowledge is not even lost knowledge.
7. **Funerals are the graduation ceremony.**
  - Other subjects are expected to become skills within a reasonable time.

## **Related Thoughts:**

Suppose we are (or could be) in heaven - but we're messing it up.

- We should (at least) apply ourselves to making life on Earth  
not Hell for the average human being; so then, why not Heaven?

If human beings are a bad design, whose fault is it?

If human beings are not a bad design, then let's celebrate our existence.

Either way, how can we: live as God intended, or now intends, and enjoy life,  
without being consumed by our weaknesses?

Orders-of-magnitude more harm than good have been realized under the banner of "Loyalty",  
which is commonly used to pervert self-control.

Self-control, which frequently underlies vicious behavior, is not an adequate substitute for self-restraint.

In the context of a shared set of rules, you don't have to fear people who have self-restraint.

Have a good reason for every rule, and share the rules.

Writers implicitly change the rules and explicitly label people as heroes or scoundrels, more or less at will.  
Neither saints nor sinners exist on a firm foundation without shared rules. (e.g.: No rules, no scoundrels.)  
The hippies made one big mistake: in rejecting rules, they denied themselves honor... without sufficient  
understanding to have love replace honor. How do we better know and show God's love?

## Suggestions

- the upside

### **Guidelines:**

- 1. Love God more than anything else.**
- 2. Love other people equally to yourself.**
- 3. Avoid harm to other people and addictions.**
- 4. Within these constraints, strive to make life enjoyable.**
- 5. Seek and you shall find.**

### **Clarification:**

#### **1. Love God more than anything else.** (e.g.: yourself +1%)

Actions include: prayer, thanksgiving, stewardship, and compassion. Praise?  
(guidance) (appreciation) (responsibility) and (humility) (implicit)

*A stronger statement would be:*

#### **Love God more than everything else combined** (i.e. 51% plus).

...as in: "Leave your boats and fishnets behind."

which was expected of some, but not all, believers.

Either way, there's mental energy left for accomplishing the remaining four guidelines because neither premise is extreme.

Insensitivity goes hand-in-hand with adopting extreme premises. Once you accept an extreme premise, you are at substantial risk of being manipulated:

*Clever minds morph extreme premises into agendas  
that raise hell in the lives of other people.*

Upon capturing Jerusalem, the Crusaders killed (among others) all the Christians therein. Restitution had long since been made for the injustices used to justify the crusades.

#### **2. Love other people equally to yourself.**

Perhaps "love" in this context resembles "proactively wishing other people well".

#### **3. Avoid harm to other people and addictions.**

"Thou shalt not" laws are created in opposition to alluring choices that have repeatedly demonstrated harmful consequences for society.

"Addictions" are recurring choices that disrupt balance.

#### **4. Within these constraints, strive make life enjoyable.**

This is a candidate focus for "properly applied stewardship", providing for food, drink, clothing, shelter, healthcare, offspring in moderation, etc.

With a long-term view, seek sustainable pleasures while avoiding alluring-but-harmful choices. Being an accepted person in an enduring community where "everybody knows your name" is an example. Humor, in its many positive forms, is another.

#### **5. Seek and you shall find.**

Find a balance and improve its stability. In humility, thinking is not a sin.

Web source: [www.setterholm.com](http://www.setterholm.com) /Lutheran /Lutheran Concerns and SuggestionsE.pdf