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allowed his heart to grow hard.

**Some People Will Allow The Gospel To Change Their Lives!**

One of the greatest stories of conversion in the Bible took place in the ancient city of Nineveh. God sent Jonah, a reluctant prophet, to preach to them. *"The people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them" (Jonah 3:5).* The people of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. *"Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it" (Jonah 3:10).*

King David sinned against the Lord by committing adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11). When Nathan the prophet rebuked him, David confessed, *"I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sam. 12:13).* David then wrote one of the most beautiful Psalms in the Bible. *"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight – that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge." (Psalms 51:1-4).*

Saul of Tarsus was *"a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man" (1 Tim. 1:13).* However, when the Lord appeared to him and challenged his way of life, Saul cried out, *"Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6).* Saul, later known as Paul, allowed the gospel to melt his heart

and transform his life.

The sermon preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost caused many in his audience to be *"cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37).* This cutting to the heart caused them to realize the terrible crime they had committed when they put the Son of God to death. Those cut to the heart then cried out, *"Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).* Peter then told them to *"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).* That same day about 3,000 people obeyed the gospel of Christ (Acts 2:41).

**Conclusion**

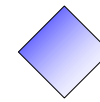
Do you really love the truth? If you don't love the truth, God will allow you to believe a lie (2 Thess. 2:10).

How do you react to the truth when some preacher points out that your life is not in harmony with the revealed will of God? Do you get angry? Do you want to fire the preacher? Or, like the Prodigal Son, do acknowledge that you have sinned against heaven and beg for God's mercy and forgiveness?

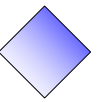
How you react to the truth reveals what you are really made of. The gospel is like fire – it will soften wax and harden clay. What effect will it have on you?

If you are concerned about business interests, worldly affairs and material things rather than things sacred and holy, the result will be that your heart will become hardened. There is a chance you will reach the point where the gospel has lost its power upon you and you are doomed to destruction.

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# The Voice of Truth



May 30, 2010

**The Bible is the Blueprint for Human Conduct**

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The word of God, the scriptures, offers to mankind principles to help them make decisions in all areas of human conduct. For many years, atheistic, pagan philosophers have assumed the duty to teach what they feel is right for human conduct. *"...every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).* These men have failed every time because they have failed to consider what God has said in His words on a given conduct pattern. *"...they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?" (Jeremiah 8:9).* *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).* The Bible offers a clear voice, and throws light on how we are to live.

Listen carefully: there can be no morality without God! Why? Because God is the absolute standard of good (Matthew 19:17; 1 John 1:5; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalms 147:17; Isaiah 45:19; Hosea 9:11; Habakkuk 1:13). We are told that the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared unto all men, *"teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12).* Peter added: *"According as his divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3).* Man cannot know right and wrong by reasoning on his own: *"O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).* *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).*

The world about us makes little effort to follow the blueprint of the word of God. People have rejected God's standard. We are living in a time when little attention is given to the word of God and much attention is given to doing what pleases the desire of men. Many have no regard for the moral teachings of the Bible. There is simply too much

**"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ..." Titus 2:11-12**

of "Hell" in the world today. The sinful world has always condoned evil practices, such as dancing, immodest dress, profanity, gambling, fornication, and the use of alcohol. We must return to the teaching of God's standard found in His word (Galatians 5:19-21). It must be taught what God has said about the sins of adultery, homosexuality, fornication, immodesty, drinking and any form of loose living. People believe they have the right to act as they wish. Wrong! What we do in word or deed we are to do all in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17). *"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).*

The word of God provides us with righteousness (Proverbs 14:34; Psalms 33:12). *"Every word of God is pure" (Proverbs 30:5).* There is a standard of behavior that God expects men to follow, and it's in His word, the blueprint of human conduct. All men everywhere need to return to the wholesome purity Jesus stressed in Matthew 5:8. God's word is man's light, lamp and path (Psalm 119:105); it is man's hope against sin (Psalm 119:11); it sanctifies (John 17:17); it cleanses (Ephesians 5:26); it gives us understanding (Psalms 119:130); it has the power to produce godliness (2 Peter 1:3); to produce a new life (James 1:18; Romans 6:17-18).

Notice what Ezekiel told the children of Israel, *"And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean" (Ezekiel 44:23).* God's word does that for us today; it is our blueprint for human conduct. The Bible moral code is wonderfully practical; every moral

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About the Hillcrest church of Christ		
Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew		
How to Contact Us	Our Address	Schedule of Assembly
Telephone: (920)499-5677 E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com  	1621 Hillcrest Drive Green Bay, WI 54313 	Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*  <small>*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month</small>
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rule that God has given is for our good. The gospel changes the heart or thinking; the mind is renewed (**Romans 12:1-2**).

Man is incapable of directing his steps in life. The Israelites had attempted to direct their lives; they had for-

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## Do You Love The Truth? By David Padfield

The wise man in the book of Proverbs admonishes us to "*buy the truth, and do not sell it*" (**Prov. 23:23**). Truth is to be a valuable commodity in our lives – we are to obtain it at all costs and once obtained, never let it slip from our hands. It is the truth that sets us free from the shackles of sin (**John 8:32**).

When I started preaching I labored under several false assumptions, one of them was that all people valued the truth in the same way I did. I thought that if you would go out and tell people the truth that they would jump at the chance to go wherever it led. However, some people love darkness more than light, because their deeds are evil (**John 3:19**).

Not only was I wrong about the world in general hungering for the truth, I was wrong in my assumption that all the people claiming to be Christians were really striving to find out what God required of them – I'm talking about people who occupied the pews in buildings where I have preached. I've found out that a lot of people want "the truth" as long as it does not disturb them or present any challenges in their lives.

What about you? Can you honestly say that you love the truth? When it comes to religious matters, do you want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? In this article I want to examine how people react to the truth.

### Some People React With Anger

King Saul was told to utterly destroy the Amalekites (**1 Sam. 15:3**). Saul did most of what God had commanded, but he spared king Agag and the best of the sheep and oxen (**1 Sam. 15:8-9**). Later, when Saul saw the prophet Samuel walking towards him said, "*Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord*" (**1 Sam. 15:13**). The truth of the matter is that Saul had not obeyed the voice of God, and Samuel rebuked him for it (**1 Sam. 15:14**). Saul protested in anger and Samuel told him

saken God's way: the result is captivity! The scriptures must be the foundation of any moral restoration. The Bible alone is our answer! It is past high time that God's morality found its way back into the lives of men and women. •

to be quiet (**1 Sam. 15:20-23**). Samuel then departed from the presence of Saul, never to see him again in this life (**1 Sam. 15:34-35**).

Paul preached to a Jewish mob in the city of Jerusalem (**Acts 22:1-21**). He taught the truth about Jesus, but when he mentioned his own mission to the Gentiles, they got angry. "*And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!' Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air*" (**Acts 22:22-23**).

In December of 1987 I had a public debate with a Baptist preacher in Evansville, Indiana. My opponent had preached in Evansville for many years, and the debate was his idea. We scheduled a four-night debate to discuss baptism and whether or not one could be saved by faith alone. The first night of the debate went well, and I pressed my points as best I could. On the second night my opponent got into the pulpit and announced he was not going to continue with the debate. He then said, "I still believe that men are saved by faith alone – but I realize you can't prove that from the Bible. But if you don't think my mother is saved, I'll meet you in the parking lot!" Here was a man who knew his position could not be supported by the Bible, but instead of changing his position he offered a fist fight!

### Some People Attack The Messenger

Ahab, king of Israel, was a very wicked king. He married Jezebel, a woman guilty of murdering God's own prophets. He worshipped and served Baal, and even built an altar and a temple for Baal in Samaria. "Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him" (**1 Kings 16:33**).

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The great prophet Elijah proclaimed a drought as punishment for the sins of Ahab – and it lasted three years (**1 Kings 17:1; 18:1**). One of the most interesting points of the story is the reaction of Ahab when he met Elijah. "*Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, 'Is that you, O troubler of Israel?'*" (**1 Kings 18:17**). Ahab caused the drought in the land of Israel because of his sins, but he blamed the messenger!

John the Baptist lost his life because of his stand on marriage, divorce and remarriage (**Matt. 14:1-10**). John had informed Herod that he was living in sin because he married Herodias, a woman he had no lawful right to marry. At Herod's birthday party he promised the daughter of Herodias that she could have anything she wanted. After being prompted by her mother she requested the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

The man who preaches where my parents go to church recently got fired. The circumstances of his firing were rather unusual. I've known the man for several years and have always thought highly of him. He was honorable in conduct and sound in teaching. The problem was not that he taught error, but rather that he taught the truth on moral issues – and immoral people just don't like that type of preaching. So, instead of repenting of their immoral conduct, a few of the men in the congregation decided it would be easier to fire the preacher!

### Some People Will Lash Out At Others

Sometimes wicked people lash out at innocent people who just happen to be nearby. Cain took out his anger on his brother Abel. Cain started off bad by offering a bad sacrifice to God (**Gen. 4:3-5**). Abel had acted in faith at the direction of God and offered an acceptable sacrifice (**Heb. 11:4; Rom. 10:17**). Cain got depressed when God rejected his sacrifice (**Gen. 4:6**).

God told Cain that he would feel right when he acted right (**Gen. 4:7**). In his depression, Cain killed his own brother (**Gen. 4:8**). What had Abel been guilty of? What sin had he committed? As far as I can tell, Abel just happened to be in the wrong place when a wicked man felt the guilt of his own sins and lashed out. "*For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.*" (**1 John 3:13**).

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The same thing happens today – the preacher preaches the truth and someone gets their feelings hurt because it reflects upon them. Instead of repenting of the error of their ways, the guilty party will often lash out at other people. Sometimes they lash out at their husband, wife or children. Weak Christians will often lash out at faithful Christians who happen to be nearby.

This is the same problem the apostle Peter had (**John 21:15-23**). Just prior to His ascension back into heaven, Jesus asked the apostle Peter three times if he loved Him. Peter was deeply grieved by the questions and then pointed to John and said, "*But Lord, what about this man?*" Our Lord responded by telling Peter it was none of his business. Peter had an obligation to follow Jesus regardless of what John did.

### Some People Will Harden Their Heart

Look at the example of Pharaoh during the time of Moses. God said He would harden Pharaoh's heart (**Exo. 4:21; 7:3**). But, the Bible also says Pharaoh hardened his own heart (**Exo. 8:15, 32; 9:34**). What happened was this: every one of the plagues made Pharaoh more rebellious against God. It was not God's plan to terrify Pharaoh into submission – every plague was a warning designed to give him another chance to soften his heart, but Pharaoh refused. In our day, the preaching of the gospel has had on many souls exactly the same effect as the Lord's demand to Pharaoh.

The real question is, "What shall my attitude be towards the commands of God?" Will my heart be hardened or softened by God's appeal to me? Will I deny myself, take up my cross and follow Him (**Matt. 16:24**)? My attitude and actions will depend upon whether or not I love the truth!

Paul warned the Hebrew Christians about this very thing. They were told to not harden their hearts like their ancestors did in the wilderness (**Heb. 3:7-13**). It is possible for us to harden our hearts through the "deceitfulness of sin."

On one occasion Paul had the opportunity to preach to Felix. Luke tells us that as Paul "*reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, 'Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you'*" (**Acts 24:25**). There is no record of Felix ever obeying the gospel of Christ – he