

As Good a Time as Any!

By Jonathan L. Perz

The phrase almost seems passé. In many ways it seems careless and flippant, rather than careful and planned. In some ways, it is almost too casual a phrase for what I am about to suggest. Nevertheless, with the New Year just days away, is it not as good a time as any to evaluate the condition of your soul and then do something about it?

It is high time many sleepwalking Christians awake from their lethargic slumber and get about the Lord's business! "And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed" (Rom. 13:11). Has the spiritual funk you are in rendered you fruitless in things eternally important (Prov. 6:4-11)? Are you leading souls to the Savior (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16)? Are you maintaining and abounding in good works (1 Cor. 15:58; Tit. 3:14)? Are you growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18)? Perhaps it is as good a time as any for you to get to back to

work!

There are many who have known for a long time what they must do to begin their walk with Christ. They have sipped from the well of salvation—God's word. They know what it is the Lord wants of them. They know what it is they need from the Lord. Yet, for one relatively ridiculous reason or another, they choose not to drink deeply and demonstrate their faith in God by obedience to His word (Rom. 10:17; 6:17; 2:8; 2 Thess. 1:8). "Therefore, lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21). Perhaps it is as good a time as any to do more than just hear the word, but to act on it (Jas. 1:22-25; 2:14-26)!

One thing is certain, God's longsuffering will not endure forever (2 Pet. 2:9ff). Indeed, now is as good a time as any to avail yourself of His grace and mercy.

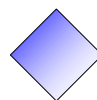
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It's Still Sin

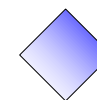
Many may call it an "alternate lifestyle." Ones may falsely suggest they were born that way while others may call such ones "gay," "homosexual," or "strange." Some may defend their right to make their own decisions.

But friend, God said centuries ago, such action is SIN, and it is STILL SIN! Man may accept it, embrace it, support, legalize it, but it is STILL SIN! Making sin legal does not make it right!

Television programs have glorified this sinful action. Let us stand up, be strong and oppose that which God said was SIN! Let us speak up, letting our voice be heard – to television stations, advertisers, magazines, etc. May we stand for righteousness and oppose ungodliness. ♦



The Voice of Truth



June 12, 2011

Hate Every False Way

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Should we be upset, disturbed, or worried when we hear churches of Christ not following God's pattern? Do you hate to hear of these brethren teaching false doctrine? Does it break your heart? Do you grieve? I have had some brethren tell me NO! Jeremiah's heart was broken within him because of the false prophets. "Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets: all my bones shake, I am like a drunken man . . .," (Jeremiah 23:9). He was shocked and saddened by the corruption within the nation of Judah. His heart "...is broken...all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man." Why is the prophet so deeply disturbed; why is he overcome by grief? It is because of his reverence for Jehovah, and his respect for the word of God which he hears reviled and rejected even among the priests and prophets of the land.

way," (Psalm 119:104). God hates every false way, and we can see this from Genesis 6:3-8 and Revelation 2:6. It should upset, disturb and grieve us when we hear false doctrine being taught!

We are to expose error! We must be active in opposing, exposing and reproving it (Ephesians 5:10-11; John 3:20; Romans 16:17-18; 1 John 4:1). Don't we have the same respect and reverence for God's word as Jeremiah? Does it not bother you to see Christ's body, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23), which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28) as nothing more than a denomination?

One day, brethren, we are going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10), and one of the things Christ is going to ask is: did we oppose those who were in error? (Jude 3). ♦

We as God's children should "hate every false

With Such, No, Not To Eat

By Jimmy Pettigrew

"But as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat" (1 Corinthians 5:11).

about men of the world, because the only way to avoid all association with them would be ". . . go out of the world" (1 Corinthians 5:10). This in itself rules out consideration of the Lord's Supper. Paul was speaking of eating at the table, keeping company with fornicators in the church. But notice also this included other sins along with fornication! The covetous, extortioners, idolaters, railers, and drunkards these also are listed in the same catalogue!

In the first part of this chapter, Paul deals with the problem of incest in the congregation, and urged purity in the church. "It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one (of you) hath his father's wife" (1 Corinthians 5:1). The Corinthians had done nothing about it. Paul commands them "to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:5).

If members in the church are guilty of living this way, then loyal saints are not to keep company with them! Don't invite them to eat, play games in your homes! Don't let the world see you condoning such lives in Christ's church! You cannot eat, or play with one in the church who is withdrawn guilty of such sins. It's just that simple. ♦

In verse 9 and 10, he told them not to keep company with fornicators, but stressed that this applied to those in the church not to those outside! He was not speaking

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About the Hillcrest church of Christ

Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew

How to Contact Us

Telephone: (920)499-5677
E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com



Our Address

1621 Hillcrest Drive
Green Bay, WI 54313



Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com

“You Are Known By What You Do!”

By Jarrod Jacobs

In the long ago, when Naaman came to the king of Israel asking for healing from leprosy (**II Kings 5:5-6**), Elisha sent word to the king saying, “...let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel” (**II Kings 5:8**). How would Naaman “know that there is a prophet in Israel”? Put simply, it is because Elisha would heal him of his leprosy by the power of God. **Ezekiel 2:4-5** speaks in a similar way concerning Ezekiel and his actions and teaching among the Jews.

God has always emphasized men’s actions over mere intentions. While there is no question our intent, mind, or heart, needs to be right with God (**Ps. 51:10, 78:37; II Cor. 8:12, 9:7**), it counts for nothing if all we have are nice dreams or nice wishes and never act upon what is written! You see, we are not known by plans, but we are known by what we do!

This truth is seen in the first century as well. Folks in Ephesus were able to distinguish between the true doctrine and true miracles performed by the apostle Paul and the false doctrine and false miracles performed by certain Jews (**Acts 19:11-20**). When the people learned of the failed exorcism by Sceva’s sons, “*fear fell on them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified*” (**v. 17**). Then, “*many that believed came and confessed and shewed their deeds*” (**v. 18**). Yes friends, you are known by what you do! The apostle Paul was known by what he did in

Ephesus during those years, and his actions motivated many people to reject idolatry and accept the Lord. What I find interesting is the “twist” in this account that shows that in the exposing of Sceva’s sons as frauds, the people continued turning to the Lord! When these men failed, their failure just made the truth shine that much brighter! In this case in **Acts 19:13-16**, they were known by what they failed to do!

Is it any wonder then that Christ said that those who are a part of His kingdom are those who let their “*light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*” (**Matt. 5:16**)? Is it any wonder that Christ would speak of the Judgment Day, and tell those listening, “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*” (**Matt. 7:21**)? The New Testament is clear about the fact that we are to be judged by our works on that last day (**II Cor. 5:10**). In the meantime, we understand that our influence, our words and deeds, not only have an impact on those around us now, but also upon those we leave behind (See: **Rev. 14:13; I Tim. 5:24!**)

We may “claim” many things. We may have many good intentions. Yet, you are known by what you do! Knowing this is true, what do people know about you?

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

Leading By Example

By Jeff S. Smith, www.electronicgospel.com

Jesus Christ set the standard for authority and leadership in becoming the Chief Shepherd of his flock – what we usually call the church.

The Holy Spirit says that he “*loved the church and gave himself up for her,*” even though he was her head and master (see **Ephesians 5:25, 1:22**). Authority, especially in the home and the church of Christ, is not a matter of self-ish ambition, self-promotion or self-service, but one of selflessness and service to others. So many generations of men abused their scriptural headship in the home so that they could domineer their wives and intimidate their children, but a closer reading of the text reveals a much more emotional attachment. Headship was not to be about power, but about promoting the spiritual and physical welfare of those in one’s charge. Husbands were admonished to love and cherish their wives, to nurture and

admonish their children, being careful not to alienate their affections or provoke them to wrath (see **Ephesians 5:22-6:4**).

The same principle holds true as it concerns the oversight of local congregations. Men are appointed as pastors of the flock according to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit so that they might shepherd the congregation, “*not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock*” (**First Peter 5:3**).

Clinton Hamilton comments upon the verse: “Elders in the discharge of their duties in relation to the brethren are not to be autocratic or ‘bossy.’ There could well be the tendency of elders to want to dominate or control with ‘an iron hand’” (*Truth Commentaries: First Peter*, 294).

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In his seminal work on the office, *Scriptural Elders and Deacons*, H.E. Phillips wrote, “A shepherd sets the example for the sheep to follow. He goes before them and leads rather than drives” (193). He references the words of Jesus in **John 10:4**: “*When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.*” Phillips continues, “The elders are not to be ‘lords’ in their rule, as a dictator or pope” and later writes, “The most effective way of leading people is to be an example to them. That was the course that Christ and his apostles took. Example has a powerful drawing element” (194).

Surely the same is true in the home, especially when parents are heard to command one of their children while personally exhibiting the opposite behavior. A parent who counsels against smoking, drinking, gossiping, laziness and anything else will find his teaching severely muted if he should practice those very things himself. Children, though in subjection, are too smart to be fooled for very long by parents who do not practice what they preach. Hypocrisy is the white noise that drowns out the pious sounds of an insincere teacher.

Fathers who rule the roost with an iron fist sometimes are rewarded with compliance, but later discover that it is only temporary and far from genuine. When their charges gain enough maturity or independence to rebel, their rebellion is thorough and dramatic. That is why the New Testament solemnly warns “*Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*” When discipline is arbitrary, self-serving or vindictive, a child is discouraged by an apparent lack of paternal love and reason.

Lording it over the flock at home is no more effective than lording oneself over a local church. The apostle John rebuked one Diotrophes who loved to have preeminence among the church, and so refused the authority of the apostles with malicious words and a refusal to accept anyone who might prove to be a rival for power (see **Third John 9-11**).

The qualities enumerated twice by Paul in his discus-

sion of the eldership are not only minimum requirements for the job, but they are prominent areas in which office-holders must already be examples to others. As preacher, Timothy had a leadership role in the church at Ephesus, especially before bishops were ordained. Paul told him to “*set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity*” (**First Timothy 4:12**). Titus, also charged with appointing elders on Crete, was reminded to “*Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned*” (**2:7-8**).

Christians occasionally find themselves in other positions of authority as well – in the military, on the job, in school clubs or organizations like the football team and band. The principles of leadership embodied in **First Peter 5** and **John 10** are equally useful outside the home and church as well. Leadership that is dictatorial or appears to exist for the sole purpose of consolidating power will only produce shallow and temporary loyalty. Even slave masters were told to “*stop your threatening*” (**Ephesians 6:9**) and to treat those in subjection “*justly and fairly*” (**Colossians 4:1**). If such was true of first century slaves and masters, how much more should it be true of twenty-first century heads and subjects in whatever their setting?

Fathers, elders, governors and supervisors must all seek to exercise their authority as good stewards of that blessing from God (see **Romans 13:1**). God intends for leaders to promote the well-being of the led, not their own ambition, pride or sensation of power. It is very wise to consult the led rather than to rely on the false notion that perfect maturity and insight rest only in the few. Just as King Rehoboam could have averted division and disaster in Israel by heeding the sage advice of his counselors, so today’s leaders are well-served by hearing out the thoughts, ideas and concerns of the people they lead – their children, the congregation, the team.

Leadership succeeds when it engenders trust, cooperative participation and loyalty. As Phillips suggested, people are more likely to follow if they feel they are being led rather than driven. ♦

Can You Imagine?

- 1. Paul saying:** “You don’t have to obey the gospel to be saved?” Read **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**.
- 2. Paul saying:** “We are sprinkled with him in baptism?” Read **Romans 6:4**.
- 3. Jude saying:** “I don’t think it is right to argue the scriptures?” Read **Jude 3**. ♦