



The Voice of Truth



November 25, 2012

Have No Fellowship By Jimmy Pettigrew

Is it right to attend revivals or meetings held by denominations? Is it right for a member of the church to attend the regular meetings of other denominations? Our appeal should not be to human feelings or thought. We need to go to God's Word to find the answer to these questions (**Jeremiah 10:23; Isaiah 55:8-9**). We MUST have the attitude of accepting what GOD says in His Word, even if that means we must give up our own ideas.

God has always required His people to be separate. *"But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey: I am Jehovah your God, who hath separated you from the peoples,"* (**Leviticus 20:24**). God expected His people to be separated from the religious practices of other nations. He forbade them to intermarry, realizing that to intermarry with idolaters would be to take the chance of being led away from the one true God unto false worship. (Solomon is good example.) If it could happen to them, would it not be possible for it to happen to us?

We can safely say that idol worship would be a false worship and false doctrine. Further, it may be said that God wants His people to have no part with idol worship. But would that not also be true of any other false religious belief or system? Denominationalism is a false system. It teaches and practices error. What is said in the Bible concerning idolatry, and the fact that God's people should have no part in it must also be said of denominationalism.

I hear, "If I attend a denominational meeting with a friend, then they may attend with me and hear the truth." Is this a valid reason? Are they acceptable to God? *"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them,"* (**Ephesians 5:11**). Fellowship is not open to everyone without limitations or restriction. The

language of conditionally is especially clear in **1 John 1:7**. We are not to participate in, or share in the unfruitful works of darkness. This would include the idea that we are not to encourage, approve, endorse, or support such works, but rather reprove them, expose them (**John 3:20**). *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent,"* (**Romans 16:17-18**). We are commanded to mark them and avoid them that are contrary to the doctrine. We cannot have fellowship with those who walk in darkness. Those who are outside the light of Christ are not my people to have fellowship with!

Another principle we need to recognize is the fact that God never approves of conversions by compromise. Rather than compromising and saying, "If you attend our meeting, we will attend yours," the Bible says, *"Contend earnestly for the faith ...,"* (**Jude 3**). Not once in the New Testament do we have any example of any New Testament Christian compromising in such a way with God's approval. You simply cannot compromise and contend at the same time. If someone attends our meeting and obeys the gospel as a result of hearing the Word of God, it is not because you compromised and attended with them so that they would attend with you; but, it is in spite of your compromise. God's Word is the power to save a soul (**Romans 1:16; John 8:32; James 1:21**). Compromise has never won a soul to Christ. Rather than compromise winning non-Christians to Christ, the Holy Spirit says it is the manner of life that the Christian lives (**1 Peter 3:1-2**).

If we want to make heaven our home, we need to think like God thinks and do those things the way God wants! *

**Either the Bible will keep you from sin . . .
Or sin will keep you from the Bible.**

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“Satan Works Overtime”

By Jarrod Jacobs

The Scriptures describe Satan as being active. In Job’s day, we see Satan “*going to and fro on the earth, and ... walking up and down on it*” (**Job 1:7, 2:2**). Satan was walking all over the earth looking for a righteous man. In the New Testament, Peter warned, “*Be sober-minded, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour*” (**I Pet. 5:8**). In nature, a lioness will creep and wait patiently for her time to strike and kill her prey. In hunting, she is active and has a goal in mind — food for herself and her cubs. Notice, Satan is also described as being as active as that hungry, hunting lion! Jesus said that Satan was a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies (**Jn. 8:44**). He is the author of lies and murder, and his actions continue to this day.

Notice the terminology used in reference to Satan. Satan is not sitting somewhere on a beach relaxing. We do not get the impression that Satan gets up some mornings and says, “Today, I will take the morning off.” Look at this world. Satan has his hand in the TV stations, in the newspaper, in magazines, in radios. He is in our schools, our military, our government, and in our homes. No, friends, Satan does not rest! Satan works **overtime!**

Satan Works Overtime In Families

Observe the character and content of most families, and we will see Satan’s work. Divorce, abuse, (verbal, physical, etc.), ungodly behavior, being lax in training the children, hypocritical behavior, and many other things are present in families due to Satan’s influence. Remember, as goes the home, so goes the nation. Therefore, we find Satan working “overtime” in the home, and especially in the homes of Christians to try and lure them away from God and His will so as to have an impact on the home, and by extension, the church and government.

Satan Works Overtime In Government.

When laws of men are enacted which encourage and sanction sin (ex: gambling/lotteries, legalized alcohol, abortion of babies, homosexuality, etc.), you can rest assured that Satan has been working overtime among government’s leaders! He has been working among the nations of men ever since government began. Consider the wicked kings God names among the Jews and the Gentiles

in the Old Testament! Then, look into the New Testament and be reminded of the sins of Herod the Great, Agrippa I and II, Caesar, etc. In studying these leaders, we find such sins as pride, lying, stealing, murder, homosexuality, etc. were committed. When we look at government leaders today, we find many of them falling into the same trap! These facts all bear record to the fact that Satan has been at work in the government!

Satan Works Overtime Among Individuals.

The book of I John lets us know that men are tempted with the lusts of the flesh and eyes, and the pride of life (**I Jn. 2:15-17**). Truly, Satan walks around as a lion looking for his next meal (**I Pet. 5:8**)! Satan has not stopped yet, but continues to look for the “weak,” “sickly,” and those who are just unaware of their surroundings. When we see folks caught up in alcoholism, abusive behavior with others, lying, stealing, pornography, being unfaithful to God, ignorant of His word, not praying, not living as we should in Christ, etc., we are seeing the evidence of a people who are victims of Satan. Yes, Satan works overtime!

My observation is that many Christians are lax in their attitude toward Satan and his work. For this, we can also thank Satan. He wants folks to be unimpressed with him, and make light of his tactics. If folks think Satan is a myth, or a joke, he is happy with this, for he knows those who will not take him seriously, will not take the salvation of their souls seriously, either (contrast Jesus’ teaching: **Matt. 16:26**). Solomon wrote, “*Fools mock at sin*” (**Prov. 14:9**). How Satan loves those “fools”! He wants even more people to be foolish, and works “overtime” to make this happen!

Conclusion

Can we fight against Satan? Absolutely! He is powerful, but Christ has given us the weapons and armor for fighting Satan (**Eph. 6:10-17; Rom. 13:12, 14; II Cor. 10:3-5**). Now we must **use them!** Perhaps we forgot that we are at war with Satan. Let us awake from sleep and be busy fighting temptation, as well as living a faithful life (**I Cor. 15:58**). Look to God (not self) for strength (**Phil. 4:13**). Exercise your senses (**Heb. 5:14**). We can win!

Credit: The Old Paths - 11/4/12 ♦

**When an archer misses the mark, he turns and looks for the fault within himself.
Failure to hit the bull’s-eye is never the fault of the target. To improve your aim –
Improve yourself.**

Minding the Things of Men

By Jonathan L. Perz

The Bible says, “*And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men’*” (Mark 8:31-33).

Imagine receiving such a strong rebuke from the Son of God! The thought of such words from the Lord should be enough to make anyone feel extremely uncomfortable—to say the least! Yet, what was it that Peter said that merited the rebuke, “Get behind Me, Satan!”? Matthew tells us in his account that Peter said, “*Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You,*” and adds that Jesus declared Peter’s words an “*offense to Him*” (Matthew 16:21-23).

At first glance, Peter’s words and thoughts seem to be for Jesus’ well-being and care. It appears that Peter does not want to lose his Master. However, when we look at the condemnation Jesus expressed to Peter, the picture becomes clearer. Indeed, Peter’s concern was for the “things of men” when it should have been directed toward the “things of God.” Jesus, who knows the hearts of men, revealed as much.

How many times do we find ourselves more concerned with the things of men than with the things of God? I believe, if we honestly evaluate ourselves, the answer will be alarming.

Have you ever worried more about what someone might think of you for quoting a Bible verse than what God would think of you for spurning the opportunity? As God’s vessels, we are to spread the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:19-20). Yet, do we allow far too many precious opportunities to slip through our fingers? Do we fear the repercussions of saying what is necessary and end up only saying what someone wants to hear? Indeed, when we worry more about what men will think of us than what God will think of us, we are an offense unto God (John 12:42-43)!

Do you fear missing work more than you fear missing worship services? This is not to say that work is not important or that we should not strive to always maintain good attendance at work. Indeed, the Bible says, “*If anyone will*

not work, neither shall he eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Yet, the emphasis is on the word “more” in the aforementioned question. When we have the attitude that says, “I can miss today’s worship service, or this evening’s Bible study,” what is it we are saying to God? Do we fear our employer’s wrath more than God’s? Do we enjoy work more than we enjoy worshipping the Creator of the Universe? I would hate to find myself having to answer these questions before God on the great Day of Judgment. The Hebrew writer expresses it best, when he says we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but exhort one another, “*and so much more as we see the Day approaching*” (Hebrews 10:25). Yes, we often mind the things of men more than the things of God!

Do recreation and entertainment take precedence over study and prayer in your life? Once again, we are not saying recreation and entertainment are wrong (though much of what this world offers in these areas is sinful). Sometimes these things are good and necessary. However, many neglect study and prayer in their lives. There is no personal devotion to God manifested in the things they do on a daily basis. For many, to give thanks for their food during the day is a difficult task to remember. What spends more time in your hands—your television remote or your Bible? Beyond any doubt, these are indicators of our priorities! Surely, the things of God (i.e. study and prayer) should command a more prominent role in our personal lives!

Even on a financial level, we must ask ourselves, *Am I more interested in buying the “things” of men than I am in doing godly and charitable things with my money?* Yes, this is a question that probably strikes to the heart for all of us. In a possession-oriented society such as the one we live in, this mindset is easy to come by. To truly evaluate ourselves on this question, all we need to do is to look around us – at our possessions, our “toys,” our “things.” How does the sum total of their value measure against the generosity, good deeds, and alms we give for others? Paul says, “*Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out*” (1 Timothy 6:6-7). He commanded the rich to “*do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share*” (1 Timothy 6:18). Indeed these are far more noble and righteous financial pursuits. Consider Cornelius, who Luke says, “*gave alms generously to the people*” (Acts 10:2). Certainly, as we evaluate our financial

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lives, we can find more ways to mind the things of God over the "things" of men. It was Jesus who said, "Inasmuch as you do to the least of these My brethren, you do it to Me" (Matthew 25:40). If this is not a motivator, I do not know what is!

As we consider our lives in light of the Lord's rebuke of Peter, do we find ourselves deserving of the same rebuke,

"Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of things of God, but the things of men" (Mark 8:33)? **If so, we are not without hope!** Let our minds be renewed (Ephesians 4:23) and our lives be transformed (Romans 12:2). Let us all raise our sights toward heaven and be more mindful of the "things of God." Begin now, lest it become too late!

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

What Do I Owe My Congregation?

Author unknown

I owe it my loyalty. I must help carry out every good work it undertakes. I should help other congregations in special efforts, but I should not neglect my home congregation. I owe it my dependability. I am depending on it for many things it does in my behalf. It is not fair and right for me to depend on it and not be such that it cannot depend on me.

I owe it my financial support. It takes money to operate the church and preach the gospel. I am responsible to the Lord to give as He has prospered me. My home congregation has first call on my financial ability, for if the members of the church do not support the work of the home congregation, it will not be supported. The expenses go on whether I am there or not, so I should make up my contribution when absent.

I owe it my presence. If everyone stayed home there would be no worship of God. I am responsible as anyone to attend all of my congregation's services. I must not be a parasite.

I owe it the influence of a godly life. The life I live either helps others to obey the gospel or makes it the harder for them. How I live affects the work of the church and the salvation of the lost. I should live in such a way that my life will be blessing to others. ♦

*Don't think you can ignore the Lord in this life and
He will give you a crown in the Life to come.*

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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Our Address

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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