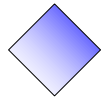


The Voice of Truth



May 19, 2013

Saving Self and Others

By Jimmy Pettigrew

“Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee” (1 Timothy 4:16).

We are to be careful in are life by our conduct, and be faithful in life (1 Corinthians 4:2; Revelation 2:10). We are to live a life in such a way that Christ can be magnified in our bodies (Philippians 1:20). If you ask someone, “what do you do to a thing when you magnify it?” The unthinking answer is, “you make it larger.” But a magnifying glass doesn’t make the print larger! It just improves your vision so that you see it more clearly and distinctly. The print still remains the same size but it appears to be larger. Now, in this same respect, Christ should be magnified in our bodies and life: *“for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus” (Galatians 6:17)*. The world would see Christ more clearly and distinctly. We as Christians would be Christ’s magnifying glass for the whole world. *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me: and that (life) which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, (the faith) which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20)*.

We are to live in such a way that we draw people to Christ by being example of believers. Followers of the Lord are imitators, *“Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1)*. Be imitators of God (Ephesians 5:1). Followers of the Lord are imitators, not mere talkers! The Lord left His people and example *“that ye should follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:21)*. We are to be careful in our conduct.

The word example comes from the Greek word, which literally means an underwriting. The word was used to describe the practice of writing at the top of a page so children learning to write could write under the copy so as to imitate that which was written. Thus, figuratively, it means a copy or pattern for imitation. Christ’s life, then, is a pattern for us to imitate. The life Christ lived is not just to be admired, talked about, or sung about, but is to be fol-

lowed. “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 John 2:6). We are to live in such a way we draw people to Christ by being example of believers. *“Faithful is the saying, and concerning these things I desire that thou affirm confidently, to the end that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men” (Titus 3:8)*. *“But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18)*. We are to become more and more like Christ, and the world would see Christ living and walking in our lives. The world is to see Christ revealed in His followers.

The light of Christ is to be reflected by Christians into all the world, that all may see the good works accomplished, and be led to glorify God (Matthew 5: 16). This is what is meant to magnify Christ. *“Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables (that are) hearts of flesh” (2 Corinthians 3:2-3)*. Christians are the epistles which the world reads before being introduced to those within the Bible. The world will listen to a godly life.

Brethren, if we are not faithful how are we going to save ourselves, let alone others? We must be faithful! *“Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall minister unto me” (Psalm 101:6)*. This is the only way we can be saved by being faithful to God’s word. In doing this we will save others, who hear us or by the life we live: people seeing Christ is us. The Christian teaches with his life. There is no greater need in this entire world than for those who are members of the Lord’s spiritual body to really live the genuine Christian life. In a world that is steeped in ignorance and darkness and sin, oh, what we

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need is a glow of light from a Christian who is living their life right before God. *"Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ"* (**Philippians 1:27**). Certainly these passages should cause each one of us to think of his/her individual life: What kind of example am I living before

those whom I see every day?

I appeal to you to really live a genuine Christian life, be a good example for all to follow, *"for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee"* (**1 Timothy 4:16**). •

"Dost Thou Steal?"

By Jarrod Jacobs

In **Romans 2:21-22**, the apostle Paul warned the Roman Christians about the dangers of hypocrisy. He noted some tell-tale signs of hypocrisy when he wrote, *"Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?"* It is a careful student, and thus a careful teacher, who recognizes the fact that he cannot teach a person one thing and then practice something different! To do so breeds hypocrisy and results in the loss of good influence upon Christians and non-Christians. Yet, hypocrisy is an easy trap in which to fall! Many have played the hypocrite, while denying this reality. When spending time in self-examination, are we acting as hypocrites? Let us study and see.

The Word "Hypocrite"

The word "hypocrite" as used in the Old Testament means: "one defiled in mind and conscience, yet concealing it, and pretending to be outwardly what he is not inwardly; to have zeal and affection towards God, when his heart is far from him" (**Wilson's O.T. Word Studies**, p. 224). W.E. Vine translates "hypocrite" in this way: "primarily one who answers, then a stage-actor; hence the word became used metaphorically as a dissembler, a hypocrite" (**Vine's**, p. 582). In other words, one who says one thing and does another, a pretender.

Pretend To Be Someone You Are Not

Sadly, there are those who are "Christians in name only". In other words, they are hypocrites. While they pretend to be Christians, they are actually children of the Devil, not unlike the Jews in **John 8:44**.

The Old Testament records occasions where people literally pretended to be someone else. For example, in **Genesis 27:1-46**, we read of Jacob deceiving his father. That day, Jacob received the blessing that belonged to Esau. How was this accomplished? He dressed and acted like his brother (**Gen. 27:18-30**). This is literally what it means to be a hypocrite. Yet, we do not have to dress as

someone else to be a hypocrite!

In the New Testament, we read the account of "Christians" pretending to be unselfish givers, when in truth, they were selfish. This is found in **Acts 5:1-11**. Ananias and Sapphira pretended to give all the money gained from selling a possession (**v. 1**). In truth, they kept back part (**v. 2**), and were found to be liars (**v. 4-5**). **Acts 5** shows us that hypocrisy is a vulgar thing that needs to be avoided at all costs.

The hypocrite has always been presented in a negative light throughout the Bible. On 15 separate occasions, Jesus rebuked the people listening, calling them "hypocrites." After reading these definitions, does this sound like you? Are you pretending to be a Christian? Are you an actor?

Teach One Thing And Do Another

Many today have an attitude that is often expressed as: "do as I say, and not as I do." My friend, this will not work. This concept was what the apostle Paul was fighting against in **Romans 2**. How sad it is to see the transparent efforts of some to teach others the way of God while they themselves act as the Devil!

The Pharisees were known for teaching one thing, and doing another. In **Matthew 23:1-12**, Jesus told the multitude and the disciples not to act like the Pharisees, *"For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men..."* (**Matt. 23:4-5**). If you are like this, rest assured, people can see through you. You are fooling no one!

Conclusion

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (**II Cor. 13:5**). It is up to all of us to keep away from hypocrisy, and

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make sure it is not in our lives. Are you a pretender? Do you teach others that "now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2), but live like there is no tomorrow? Do not be a hypo-

crite! Live for Christ! Who knows what good we can do in the Lord's kingdom when we live that sincere, genuine life, that reflects Christ in all we do (Gal. 2:20)!

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

Prayer, Sin and Righteous Living

By Jonathan L. Perz

Peter wrote, as a motive to righteous living, "For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil" (1 Peter 3:12). This passage, which we originally find in the Old Testament (Psalm 34:15-16), clearly manifests a fact about God and prayer that is often overlooked—the lives we live have direct bearing on the effectiveness of our prayers.

There are many other verses that teach this same principle. For example, 1 Peter 3:7 tells husbands that their prayers can be hindered by the relationship they maintain with their spouses. This obviously applies to the wife as well.

In James 5, starting in verse 15, we read of the fact that we are to pray for one another. In verse 16, the Bible says, "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." The negative inference here, especially in light of the whole counsel of God, is that the prayers of an unrighteous man do not avail.

If we would turn through the pages of the Old Testament, we would find example upon example of the Lord refusing the sacrifices of the Israelites because of sin in their lives. One of the strongest of such statements is made beginning in Isaiah 1:11. The Bible says...

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" says the Lord. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; in-

cense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies — I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood."

This is indeed strong language. Notice especially that it was because of their sins that God says that He will not hear their prayers, though they make many of them.

What does this tell us today? The truth is that our sins are the great separator between God and man. Isaiah 59:1-2 says, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you." It should be clear to all that we cannot lead an impenitent sinful life and expect God to fulfill all of the requests we make in prayer (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46). We cannot expect God to be at our beck and call, and yet live a life contrary to everything our God is. Sin is a nasty, wicked thing and its consequences are everywhere. Let us never forget that the first consequence we will suffer is the loss of our communion with God—until we confess and forsake those sins (1 Peter 3:12; Proverbs 28:13).

The next time we pray, let us seriously consider what kind of lives we are living. If we have sin in our lives, let us be certain that we "confess our sins to Him, because He is faithful and just to forgive us all sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

THINK ABOUT IT!

When a farmer stops plowing his land, stops planting seed, and stops harvesting his crops, he has stopped doing those things that identify him as being a farmer. When a Christian stops attending worship services regularly, stops studying, stops giving as he has been prospered, and has stopped working for the Lord, he has stopped being a Christian because he has stopped doing those things that identify him as a Christian. "By their fruits ye shall know them," (Matthew 7:20). ♦

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. ♦

Do You Just Belong?

Are you an active member?
 The kind that would be missed?
 Or are you just contented that your name is on the list?
 Do you attend the meeting and mingle with the flock?
 Or do you stay away to criticize and knock?
 Do you take an active part to help the work along?
 Or are you satisfied to only just belong?
 Think this over, my dear friends:
 I know you won't go wrong.
 Are you an active member, or do you
 just belong? ♦

A pint of example is worth a barrel full of advice.

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

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