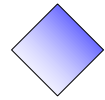


The Voice of Truth



June 9, 2013

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

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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 (**Psalms 119:105**); it is man’s hope against sin (**Psalms 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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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 Isra-

elites had attempted to direct their lives; they had forsaken 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. ♦

Has "The Salt" Lost Its Flavor?

By Jonathan L. Perz

In the great Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His disciples saying, "*You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men*" (**Matthew 5:13**). The intent of these words was to promote the need for faithful living and good examples from those following Christ. Unfortunately, many making a profession of Christianity today have lost sight of the Lord's teaching.

As the salt of the earth, Christians are to be distinct—set apart—not only by their proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ, but by the faithful lives they live. Just as salt, they are to have a distinct flavor and to be a preservative against the evils and woes of society. When they lose that distinct flavor—the soul preserving power of Christ—they are good for nothing.

To make the application more specific, simply look around at the world. Morality is in short measure these days. Things like immodest apparel, sexual immorality and lasciviousness are the "in thing." Sins of all sorts are declared good and acceptable. Homosexuality is embraced as an alternate lifestyle. Abortion has made wholesale murder legal and acceptable. Lying is commonplace and, in some places, expected. "Anything goes" is the standard for most. The unlimited vices that Hollywood and television alone have brought into the home are enough to vex any righteous soul who falls prey to their temptation. These are just the prominent sins of the world, the list of sins is endless! While conditions such as these have existed for centuries, and will continue to exist, the Lord expects better from His disciples. He says, "you are the salt of the earth."

We have lost our flavor when we are unfruitful in the Lord. When we stop growing by study and meditation of God's word, we are unfruitful (**2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Timothy 4:12-16**). When we are not rich in good works, we are unfruitful (**1 Timothy 6:17-19**). When we stop manifesting our love for our brethren and our neighbors, we are unfruitful (**2 Pet. 1:5-8**). When we grow weary in well doing, we are unfruitful (**Galatians 6:9**). Such Christians are

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"good for nothing."

We have lost our flavor if we no longer cry out and fight against the evils of this world and those who seek to justify such evils. Things such as abortion, homosexuality, sex outside of marriage, and the vices of Hollywood need to be fought, resisted, spoken against, and denounced for what they are—sin—condemnable in the sight of God (**Ephesians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 5:9-11**). Does this mean we must make every battle a big one? No. We simply need to use every opportunity afforded us to teach God's word and be a good example (**James 5:19-20; Matthew 5:16**). If Christians fail to do this, they become "good for nothing."

We have lost our flavor when we turn a blind eye to wrongs being perpetrated in this world. I can't help but think of how easy it would have been for John the Baptist to simply turn his back and ignore the sin of adultery between Herod and Herodias (**Matthew 14:3 ff**). Yet, John understood the leaven of evil, spoke against it and lost his head for his faith. The safe and easy choice was silence, yet John the Baptist was "the salt of the earth."

We have lost our flavor when we defend error. So many professing faith in Christ would never practice homosexuality or consider having an abortion, yet they want to defend the right of others to choose such an option. In the sight of God, the consequences of such thinking are one and the same as having become a homosexual or having an abortion. Consider the teaching of **Romans 1:26-32**. Yet, the more subtle the error, the easier it is to defend. Even those who I would call brethren have come to the defense of those who teach that divorce and remarriage

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for any cause is acceptable in the sight of God (**Matt. 19:1-9**). Friends, we implicate ourselves by so doing (**2 John 9-11**) and should be "thrown out and trampled underfoot," that we might be saved in the end (**1 Cor. 5**). What grave damage this little bit of leaven can do!

Finally, we have lost our flavor when we become the sinner ourselves. Such is often the case. The damage done to the cause of Christ by those who teach error, commit iniquity, live immorally, drink, gamble, lie, and manifest every conceivable wickedness in the eyes of a lost and sinful world have caused many to esteem Christianity as nothing more than a hypocrite's religion. These ungodly examples, when left unchecked and undisciplined by the

church, can virtually render a church useless in a community. Friends, such is despicable and will not go unpunished.

When Christians lose their flavor, the world loses its taste for righteousness. Whether in the home or in the workplace, amongst neighbors, family, or friends, we must always strive to be the seasoning, preserving, flavorful salt of the earth our Lord expects us to be. If we find our own lives to have lost that soul preserving flavor, let us confess and repent of our error, restore the old and straight ways, and strive never to lose our flavor again, lest we find ourselves thrown out and trampled underfoot as good for nothing (**Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; cf. Revelation 21:7-8**). *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦*

"We Are Free Moral Agents"

By Jarrod Jacobs

What does this title mean? Put simply, it means that we, as humans, have the ability to choose how we will live our lives. Though all things are created by God, God gave man the ability to do something that plants and animals cannot do. Men have the ability to obey or disobey God and then face the consequences. Man is the only one in God's creation that can tell God "no."

In the beginning of the Bible, we read about Adam and Eve's creation, and God's command to them to not eat of the tree bearing the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil and the consequences if they disobeyed (**Gen. 2:16-17, 3:3**). They abstained for a period of time, but there came a day when Satan tempted Eve to partake of this tree. She ate and then gave it to her husband and he ate of it too (**Gen. 3:6**). After this, the man and woman were cursed and driven from the garden (**Gen. 3:16-24**). Notice please that at one point in time, they both could have chosen not to eat of the fruit. It could have been that Eve ate and Adam did not, or vice versa. Each person had the ability to choose, and then had to face the consequences of their independent decision.

Free will was not lost to this world just because Adam and Eve sinned. In fact, we see men all through Scriptures faced with the opportunity to choose good or evil. A few examples of this:

- *"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30:19).*
- *"I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me" (Ps. 119:30).*
- *"... Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Lk. 10:42).*

As the apostle Paul recounted his meeting Christ on the road to Damascus and the words Christ told him; he told Agrippa, *"Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19)*. This statement lets us know that Paul had the option to choose obedience or disobedience to Christ even while on the road to Damascus. How grateful are we that he chose the right thing!

So it is with us. We stand before God as free moral agents. Will we choose to obey or disobey? Yes, the choice is ours, but so are the consequences that follow (**Matt. 7:13-14**)! The Bible was written to encourage, and exhort us to choose the right things. God will not force anyone to obey, but does present the consequences of obedience and disobedience for anyone who will listen. God wants us to willingly follow Him. What will you choose?

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

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**. ♦

THE WAY IT USED TO BE!

- What used to be called. . .
“self-control” is now called “unhealthy repression.”
- What used to be called. . .
“disgusting” is now called “adult.”
- What used to be called. . .
“living in sin” is now called “a meaningful relationship.”
- What used to be called. . .
“drunkenness” is now called “a disease.”
- What used to be called. . .
“perversion” is now called an “alternate lifestyle.”
- What used to be called. . .
“depravity” is now called “creative self-expression.”
- What used to be called. . .
“nudity” is now called “fashion.”
- What used to be called. . .
“an unborn baby” is now called “a fetus.”
- What used to be called. . .
“murder” is now called “choice.:
- What used to be called. . .
“a God fearing country” is now called “an enlightened society.” ♦

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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