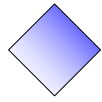


The Voice of Truth



June 15, 2014

“BE YE SEPARATE” 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 the 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 that floweth with milk and honey: I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people,"* **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 conditionality 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 which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple,"* **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**).

I hope this will stimulate your thinking and study of God's Word. If we want to make heaven our home, we need to think like God thinks and do those things the way God wants! ♦

*Truth is truth even if no one believes it.
Error is error if everyone believes it. ♦*

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“A Man After God’s Own Heart”

By Jarrod Jacobs

The statement above is well-known to most people. This statement, while not the exact Bible quotation, is based on the words of Scripture found in **I Samuel 13:14** and **Acts 13:22**. In both passages, we see reference made to David, the second king of Israel. He was the one God describes as being “after His own heart.” In fact, God makes it clear that David “*did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and did not turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite*” (**I Kings 15:5**). What made David a man after God’s own heart? What characteristics stand out when we think of this wonderful Bible character? Can we possess those characteristics today? Let us answer these questions.

What Made David A Man After God’s Own Heart?

The answer to this question is not hard to find. In **I Samuel 13:14**, after Saul had sinned in offering the sacrifice before the battle with the Philistines (**v. 9-10**), God inspired Samuel to condemn the action and then pronounce this judgment: “*You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you. For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you*” (**v. 13-14**).

I Samuel 16 records God’s selection of David as the next king of Israel. By simply reading **I Samuel 13**, we see that David was “a man after God’s own heart” because he was obedient to the Lord! Evidently, God saw in David a characteristic not found in Saul, and that was his consistency and fortitude to continue to obey God even when it was hard to do! Those who read of the life of David have to be impressed with his consistency and faithfulness to the Lord through his life.

Another attribute that makes David “a man after God’s own heart” would be his willingness to repent of sins. At no time should we equate “a man after God’s own heart” with sinlessness. This is not the case with David because he sinned at times. Some recorded occasions of sin include the time he sinned with Bathsheba and murdered Uriah (**II Sam. 11-12**). Also, the time he allowed the ark to be brought back on the new cart; (resulting in the death of Uzzah) rather than looking for the Levites who could cor-

rectly transport the ark back to Jerusalem (**II Sam. 6**). On another occasion, David committed the sin of acting when God had been silent when he numbered the people (**II Sam. 24**). This resulted in the deaths of 70,000 men. In each case, David repented and determined to do better in the future. He relied upon God and went to God for forgiveness. His attitude is probably best summed up in his words, “*Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man*” (**II Sam. 24:14**). With his godly attitude, it is not surprising that we read the following words of advice to Solomon: “*Be strong, and show yourself a man, and keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn*” (**I Kings 2:2-3**).

In connection with the above, we also see David as a humble man. He humbly repented before God when he sinned. Notice also that though he was king of Israel, and the victor in many battles, he still remembered, “*The Lord is my shepherd ...*” (**Ps. 23:1**). He freely confessed, “*I am poor and needy*” (**Ps. 86:1**). He was truly a humble man.

David was a man of faith as well. Remember that when he went out to meet Goliath in battle, he said, “*You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give you into our hand*” (**I Sam. 17:45-47**). This is but one of many examples we could cite that shows David’s great faith. He believed *in* God, and believed *God*! Doesn’t God expect the same of us today (**Heb. 11:6**)?

We can also say David was a patient man. Though chosen to be king over Israel (**I Sam. 16**), he did not lead some kind of coup, or rebellion against Saul. In fact, he would not lift a hand to harm “*the Lord’s anointed*” in any way, nor did he encourage others to do harm to him (**I Sam. 24:4-7**)! He was patient and waited until the time

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was right to serve as king of Israel. Only after Saul's death, and the time of mourning was passed did he ask God if he ought to go to the cities of Judah (**II Sam. 2:1**). Even at that time, he did not just "assume the throne"! In addition to this, David's patience is seen when he wanted to build the Temple, but God would not let him do it (**II Sam. 7**). He was satisfied to gather the materials and wait for his son to build the Temple (**I Chron. 22:2-4, 14-16, 29:2-7**). He did not overrule God's decision and start building the Temple, but was patient and did as God wanted. What wonderful examples of patience by David.

Could It Be Said That You Are One After God's Own Heart?

Notice David is not called "the" man after God's own heart, but he is "a" man who fit this description. Evidently, God acknowledges that there are others who could also be described in this way.

Friend, be honest and examine yourself (**II Cor. 13:5**).

Could God describe us as a man/woman "after His own heart"? If not, why not? What part of our lives have we decided do not belong to the God of Heaven? Have we decided that we can't be a "person after God's own heart" because we're not "good enough"? I hope that through this study, it is made clear that it is not a matter of someone being "sinless", for this is impossible (**Rom. 3:23**). It is a matter of self-sacrifice for the Lord and the willingness to be corrected and repent to God when we see that we are in error. We need to learn to be that "living sacrifice" for the Lord (**Rom. 12:1-2**) and give Him our all. Let us stand as David and be someone "after God's own heart."

When we determine we will show humility, faith, patience, and obedience to God in our spiritual lives, we will be someone "after God's heart" won't we? Let us learn a lesson from the life of David, and let us apply the attributes of his life to our own (**Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:11**). When we do this, we will grow closer to God and do much to prepare ourselves for an eternity in Heaven.

Credit: The Old Paths - 5/25/14 ♦

Sin is All About Choices

By Jonathan L. Perz

Throughout history, men have used just about every conceivable excuse to justify sin in their lives. Consider the time at the foot of Mount Sinai—in the midst of Israel's wicked idolatry—when Aaron tried to justify his poor choice. When questioned about the calf he fashioned for the Israelites to worship at their request, he told Moses, *"And I said to them, 'whoever has any gold, let them break it off.' So they gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out"* (**Exodus 32:24**). Whether it is a one-time act, or a continually repeated sin that besets one, statements such as, "The Devil made me do it," "I had no choice," or "I could not help myself," have often been heard. Nevertheless, such thinking is foreign and contrary to the word of God.

The Bible teaches that sin is a matter of individual choice (**cf. Ezekiel 18**). It begins with discerning good from evil (**Hebrews 5:14**) and then refusing the evil and choosing the good (**Isaiah 7:15**). A sure and consistent pattern for such thinking can be clearly established from the beginning of time.

In the garden, Adam and Eve were given free will, as well as some very specific instructions. They could eat of the fruit of every tree except one, which God declared off-limits. When tempted by Satan, Eve made the wrong choice—she partook of the forbidden fruit, as did Adam (**Genesis 3:1 ff**). Though Eve blamed Satan, and Adam

blamed Eve, they each bore the consequences of their individual sins, as each had made the choice to commit that sin. Pointing the finger elsewhere never justifies sin, nor does it remove the consequences.

In like fashion, Moses committed a sin when—instead of glorifying God and obeying His instructions—he glorified Aaron and himself, choosing not to follow God's command. This incident is found in **Numbers 20:7-13**. The Israelites needed water and God specifically instructed Moses on how to provide that water (**v. 8**). Moses did not heed the instructions exactly (**vs. 10-11**), thus he suffered the consequences of his wrong choice. Even when the choice to sin is made in the heat of the moment, the consequences remain.

King David is another testimony to the fact that sin is a matter of individual choice, and God will hold man accountable. David, walking on his roof one evening, came upon an awkward situation. A woman (not his wife) was bathing where she could be seen. David, now faced with a choice, subjected himself to the temptation—instead of turning away from the compromising situation. In so doing, one sin led to another—before long a great evil was done for which David suffered grave consequences (**2 Samuel 11-12**). Even if we are faced with a tempting situation, the choice to turn away and avoid its consequences is still

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available—thus, rendering our actions inexcusable.

In truth, the examples are boundless. Sin is all about choices. James wrote, *"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted of God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1:12-15)*. From this passage, we can acknowledge some simple facts about sin, temptation and choices.

1. *God does not tempt man.* God might allow man to be tempted (cf. Job's temptation by Satan), but He does not directly tempt man. As a matter of fact, with each temptation man suffers, God is faithful, in that He, *"will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13)*. This verse is bona fide proof that we, as individuals, must bear the burden of choice with each and every sin!

2. *We are tempted by our own desires.* Often, we place ourselves in bad situations. We considered the example of King David, who made the choice to be enticed, and in turn, was enticed. In like fashion, people today do the same thing. For example, men and women often allow themselves to be in compromising situations with those of the opposite sex, who are not their spouses. Too often, the outcome is fornication, infidelity, and broken homes. Like-

wise, when recovering alcoholics frequent establishments that serve alcohol, they set themselves up to sin. Consider the folly of recovering drug addicts choosing to befriend people who abuse drugs (cf. **1 Corinthians 15:33**). The list is unlimited. The fact is that we choose our circumstances, be they our workplace, our companions, or our environment. Why do we burden ourselves with situations that we are certain to stumble in and commit sin?

3. *Temptation is the birthplace of sin.* We need to realize that we have not sinned until we give in to our temptations. This does not mean we should push the threshold of temptation to the maximum. Rather, we should know that even if we are tempted, we do not have to give in! We can still turn it around! We can still avoid sin! We need to simply say NO! This is why the Spirit teaches us to *"abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22)*. We are instructed to *"resist the devil and he will flee from us" (James 4:7)*. We are told to *"flee sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:18)*. We are commanded to *"abhor what is evil, cleave to what is good" (Romans 12:9)*. We must acknowledge that even in the heat of temptation, as Satan is turning up the thermostat, we choose to avoid sin by not giving place to the devil (**Ephesians 4:27**)!

Indeed, sin is all about choices. We make choices between right and wrong, good and evil, acceptable and unacceptable, pleasing and not pleasing, truth and error every day of our lives. These choices will determine our eternity. Ultimately, the choice is between life and death! It is important to understand: it is one thing to know right from wrong and another thing altogether to choose right over wrong. Ask yourself, "What kind of choices am I making?" Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

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

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