

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

December  
14  
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## ARE WE SPIRITUAL PACIFISTS?

Jim Stauffer

We read in Ephesians the sixth chapter about the armor of God to be worn by Christians as they battle the influence of Satan. This armor is illustrated by metonymy with the actual armor of the day. Our loins are to be girded with truth, we wear the breastplate of righteousness, our feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace as we carry the shield of faith. Our head is protected by the helmet of salvation as we are armed with one offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit.

Our battle is not a typical battle of the fleshly power. **Eph. 6:12** *For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.* **2 Cor. 10:3** *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh 4 (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds), 5 casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; It is clear we wage warfare against the spiritual influence of Satan. 1 Tim. 1:18* *This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which led the way to thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare; 19 holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith:* Pacifism may be called for to achieve peace between men. But we are not to be pacifists spiritually. In fact, the only way we can initiate peace between man and God is to dress ourselves in this armor and go forth with the sword of the Spirit carrying the message of our Lord. **Rom. 5:1** *Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; The truth of God's word, obeyed by man, will deliver the most valuable peace of all. (Heb. 5:8,9)*

The task of fulfilling the charge given us as we battle against the *wiles of the devil* and the *fiery darts of the evil one*, will not be easy. This is why Paul claimed strength only through Christ. **(Phil. 4:13)** Remember Christ promised Paul strength in lieu of removing his thorn in the flesh. **2 Cor. 12:9** *And he hath said unto*

*me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* The victory in this battle cannot be achieved by our own strength, but rather that of the Lord. **Heb. 13:6** *So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?*

Make no mistake this is a battle. The line is clearly drawn between the children of God and the world. And while we must live in the world (**1 Cor. 5:9-11**) we cannot love or cherish it. (**1 John 2:15-17**) Our goal is to set forth Christ to the world. **2 Cor. 4:5** *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* This cannot be done through compromising God's principles with the world. **2 Cor. 6:14** *Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

We damage our success in this battle by the desire some have for the church to be popular. The purity of truth cannot be compromised for popularity. We all want our pews to be full at the meeting house, but we lose ground in the battle when we sacrifice the principles of God's word in order to achieve it.

War occurs when irreconcilable differences exist and both sides feel compelled to exert their influence to the fullest. The wise man said, **Prov. 23:23** *Buy the truth, and sell it not; Yea, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.* We have bought the truth and as good soldiers of the cross we must know our cause and fight to win. **2 Tim. 2:3** *Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier.*

## The Severity Of Minimizing His Severity

We human beings must constantly guard against the subtle temptation to trivialize and re-fashion God into some semblance of deity that fits our expectations and serves our desires. There is pressure from the world and the flesh to reduce God to a more manageable deity, or view Him in some way that makes Him more congenial and serviceable. We can drift away from the Biblical concept of God and Christ, and gradually develop a warped and humanistic view of God and His authority. One man called this "the dangerous illusion of a manageable deity."

Some theologians and religious writers on the contemporary scene attempt in every way they can, to deny or minimize the "severity" of God. They are playing into the hands of those who wish to reject the "severity" of God because of the moral implications of that sternness. There are many who nurture an unconfessed fear, that if they accept the "severity" of God or acknowledge His wrath, this will imply certain moral demands they find distasteful.

To be more specific, if I'm involved in adultery and desire to continue in that sin, I am comforted (deceived) by the notion that God is not severe; that He can overlook my sin or look the other way while I practice it. By the same token, if I'm participating in stealing for a living (or for fun ... doesn't matter), the concept of a severe God who punishes sin will not be agreeable. Thus, the temptation to "re-think" and revise our view of God, depending upon our involvements in daily life; that is, our involvements which run counter to divine legislation.

Isn't it clear, that so many people begin with their own behavior and that which they desire to do --- and from there they reason out their concept of God? So, their ideas of God are based on WHAT THEY DESIRE rather than WHAT IS REVEALED. What they think about God is what they want to think rather than what the Bible teaches. What we need to do is this: BEGIN WITH THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF GOD (THE TRUTH), AND ON THAT BASIS LET OUR THOUGHTS, WORDS AND DEEDS BE FORMED! Then re-shape and revise our behavior, not our concept of God.

One facet of God's character many do not readily accept is: HE IS "A JEALOUS AND AVENGING GOD!" The book of Nahum decreed punishment against the people of Ninevah (about 150 years after they repented at Jonah's preaching). The prophesy begins: "The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The Lord takes vengeance on His foes and maintains His wrath against His enemies. The Lord is slow to anger and great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished," (**Nahum 1:2-3**). Other passages likewise teach, the jealousy of God (**see Ex. 20:5; Deut. 29:20; Psa. 78:58; Ezek. 36:5**).

Now it must be said, this jealousy is not a jealousy that is tainted with sin. So often, the jealousy of man is tainted with or is productive of sin. But in no sense is God's jealousy explosive or irrational. Never does this divine disposition border on caprice or evil. It simply has

to do with the fact, GOD CANNOT ABIDE THE PRESENCE OF SIN; and He cannot merely ignore unfaithfulness to Himself.

To husbands I would ask: WHAT IF YOUR WIFE STARTED PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO OTHER MEN, WHILE SLIGHTING YOU? Would you merely ignore that? Would your attitude be: "Well, I am a man of love and compassion ... it's all right!"

To wives I would direct the same inquiry: WHAT IF YOUR HUSBAND STARTED LOOKING AT, LUSTING AFTER AND SPENDING TIME WITH OTHER WOMEN, WHILE SLIGHTING YOU? Would you allow or tolerate this?

Likewise, when people ignore God and worship men ... when people who should be following God's law, invent their own law or become a law unto themselves ... when God's people thumb their nose at God, and fall in love with the world ... when we labor to develop loop-hole arguments and theories to justify our sin -- GOD'S VERY CHARACTER CRIES OUT FOR VENGEANCE. For He is "a jealous and avenging God."

"Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God; on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off," (**Rom. 11:22**).

*by Warren Berkley*

## Selected Concern

When a Ferguson, Missouri policeman recently shot a man who reportedly had assaulted him but was unarmed, the incident grabbed widespread attention. The national press made it the lead story for several days. Citizens rioted. Social activists came and made bold speeches. President Obama made a public statement about it. Attorney General Holder sent a team of investigators and promised the full resources of the federal government, then made a personal visit.

Meanwhile, just 300 miles to the north, the city of Chicago has averaged more than a murder a day this year, including one on August 20 when a nine-year-old boy was shot while playing in his yard. His story was barely a blip on the national radar.

Why is there so much more interest in and concern about one killing than another? Reasons vary. You decide in this case. What I would like us to think about is the concept of selective concern as it relates to our own lives. Are we more concerned about some applications or violations of God's law than others?

Take honesty, for example. I have known a few brethren who from all appearances were quite honest when it came to financial matters, yet they seemingly thought little of misrepresenting others' statements or positions. Is that any less dishonest?

Israel's wilderness experiences taught them that God was outraged at their idolatry, fornication, and open rebellion, but no more so than He was at their frequent complaining. How many of us would put complaining and idolatry on equal footing?

In the church, some would be appalled at the suggestion to bring in instrumental music, yet they

seldom sing. When it comes time to appoint elders, some meticulously examine a potential appointee in regard to the family qualifications, then turn around and minimize a character or ability requirement.

Are we as concerned about positively doing right as leaving off wrong? Or vice versa?

Jesus' story of the lost brothers in **Luke 15** illustrates the problem. The younger son was lost through bad conduct. His older brother wouldn't have dreamed of engaging in such immorality, yet he was eaten up with self-righteousness and bitterness. Although he did not see it, his bad attitude made him just as lost.

Consistency is always a challenge. So is honest self-evaluation. Nevertheless, we must do our best. Remember God's charge: "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you" (**Jeremiah 7:23**)

*by Frank Himmel*

### CONVERSION OF THE CORINTHIANS

The city of Corinth was dominated by superstition, immorality, and idolatry. It had a population of some 700,000 in Paul's day; it also served as the seat of government for the province of Achaia. The lasciviousness of the city was deified in worship to Venus and Aphrodite. Religious harlots provided a steady source of income, as they plied their trade. Corinth was a wealthy, luxurious city, filled with Jewish peddlers, foreign traders, sailors, soldiers, and athletes who came there to train. It would be no compliment for someone to say you were acting "just like a Corinthian."

How would you go about trying to convince such a culture that baptism is by immersion in water and that it is essential to salvation? This was Paul's task when he came to the city in 52/53 A.D. He came with the gospel, but what did He find? The story isn't completely negative, for soon after arriving, Paul found a man by the name of Aquila, who had recently traveled from Rome to Corinth. He was there with his wife, Priscilla (**Acts 18:2**). Being tentmakers, Paul and Aquila made a natural team. They joined forces in working with their hands, and working for the Lord. Paul used the synagogue as a beginning place for his preaching (**Acts 18:4**). This was his pulpit.

The arrival of Silas and Timothy brought additional workers. Paul had separated from his companions in Berea and then traveled on to Athens. Evidently, Silas and Timothy never caught up with Paul in Athens, but they reunited in Corinth (**cf. Acts 17: 13-15**). It is rightly said that there is "strength in numbers," and Paul was encouraged to continue his preaching about Jesus. Opposition arose from the Jews, as they blasphemed against Paul and the words he spoke. The Jews would not accept Jesus as the Messiah. The lesson is clear. While God wants all men to be saved, He will not force anyone to come to Him. Paul has no choice but to leave these Jews to their own spiritual destruction; he now concentrates on the Gentiles (**Acts 18:6**).

Paul preached that Jesus was the Christ (**Acts 18:5**). True gospel preaching always honors Christ. Paul's desire was to preach only Christ and Him crucified (**1**

**Cor. 2:2**). To preach about Christ is to preach the basic principles of the gospel (**1 Cor. 15:1-4**). Preaching has no significance apart from who Jesus is. Preaching has no merit apart from the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord. While we sometimes (and it is good to do this) emphasize the commands of the gospel, namely, hear, believe, repent, and be baptized, these commands have no power apart from Christ. Obedience to the Lord is more than just being able to memorize a few verses about baptism. True conversion involves all that Christ is and all that He did for us. What were the results of Paul's preaching? **Acts 18:8** says: "And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Their hearts were receptive. Later, when Paul wrote to this church, he spoke of the great change that had taken place in the lives and hearts of so many in this city. Read about this great change in **I Corinthians 6:9-11**. The Lord told Paul to continue his work without fear, as there were many people in Corinth that would listen with a view toward salvation (**Acts 18:9-10**). Paul stayed there 18 months in blessed and favorable circumstances.

This is one of the most exciting stories in the book of Acts because it is filled with success! Yet, if we were given the job of going to this corrupt city would we have preached as Paul did? Would we have said: "No one is interested, the people are too mean, and the obstacles are too many"? Or, would we have said: "The city is full of sinners who need the gospel"? Could it be that God has "much people in this city"? Could it be that it is our responsibility to find them? Think about it?

*by Randy Harshbarger*

### WE SHALL BE PROVEN

Even Abraham, a man of faith was said to be proven by God (**Gen. 22:1**) when He called upon him to offer his only son as a sacrifice to God. We all understand the result was the power of God restraining him to prevent the actual act from taking place. But God praised him for his obedience to the command (**Gen. 22:16-18**).

There undoubtedly will be occasions in our lives where we will be tested by circumstances we could not possibly anticipate. As faithful soldiers of the cross, it is imperative we have an appropriate and equal concern for all things that oppose the teaching of God and Christ. It is necessary for us to recognize the severity of His judgment when we rationalize his commands in order to live sinfully before him. It is equally necessary for us to realize the task before us as we try to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ and be the kind of teachers that realize we are merely sowers of the seed. (**1 Cor. 3:6**) While it is true the fields are white unto harvest (**John 4:35**) it is also true there are great difficulties for men to overcome in order to accept the word of truth we speak. **Matt. 22:14** *For many are called, but few chosen.* Jesus said in **Matt. 7:13,14**, few choose the way that is strait that leads to life while the broad way that leads to destruction attracts many. We must fight the good fight of faith **2 Tim. 4:7,8** and let God give the increase.

*Jim Stauffer*

**Eph. 2:19** So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

**1Pet. 2:9** But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

## HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

**We conduct in home Bible Studies**

**We offer Correspondence Courses**

**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**

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## NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS:  
J.R. DANIEL, GRANT CLOTHIER,  
MARY CZIRR, AND JAN PATRICK.  
LORETTA TAPP HAS RETURNED HOME.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE:  
SUNDAY MORNING: EVIDENCES  
AND WEDNESDAY: THE BOOK OF  
JEREMIAH

SERMON SUNDAY AM: LET US  
CONGREGATE (TO WORSHIP)



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10