

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"*

March 17, 2019

## WHO LISTENS TO GOD AND WHEN?

*Jim Stauffer*

Jesus was not a dooms day prophet. He simply loved His creation sufficiently to warn them of danger to their souls. After all, He did give His life *a ransom for many* (Mat. 20:28).

He, therefore, explains in the following warning the extent of His knowledge of us and His care for us, *"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 'Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 'But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 'So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows. 'Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. 'But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.'"* (Mat. 10:28–33) We will be threatened in ways yet to be defined for His name's sake. Yet we should have no fear as He watches so carefully he knows the very number of hairs on our head. Those who listen to Him are those who desire to be viewed and represented favorably before God.

So the one who listens to God in the here and now is the true believer. There will be no need for a deathbed confession for this person. He plans his life of obedience in order to be confessed by the Savior in the end.

This calls to mind those who confess and show reverence to God's authority when difficult times come. When a loved one is sick, dying or has passed away. This is the time when the one who has been approached about faith in God and rejected Him, bows in prayer requesting His favor. This would be beneficial if this event brought lasting change to their lives, but alas, in most cases they are simply seeking comfort for the immediate time.

The list of those who deny God and Christ until such a time in their lives when they are completely helpless to stem the tide of personal tragedy is long and filled with reputable atheists.

Here are a few examples. Please notice how serious they become about death and eternal punishment when their time is near.

**Thomas Paine**, (2/9/1737 - 6/8/1809) - the leading atheistic writer in American colonies: "I would give worlds if I had them, that The Age of Reason had never been published. O Lord, help me! Christ, help me! . . . No, don't leave; stay with me! Send even a child to stay with me; for I am on the edge of Hell here alone. If ever the Devil had an agent, I have been that one."

**Sir Francis Newport**, (2/23/1620 - 9/19/1708) the head of an English infidel club to those gathered around his deathbed: "You need not tell me there is no God for I know there is one, and that I am in His presence! You need not tell me there is no hell. I feel myself already slipping. Wretches, cease your idle talk about there being hope for me! I know I am lost forever! Oh, that fire! Oh, the insufferable pangs of hell!"

**Voltaire**, (11/21/1694 - 5/30/1778) - the most influential atheist of Europe in his day, cried out with his dying breath: "I am abandoned by God and man; I shall go to hell! I will give you half of what I am worth, if you will give me six months life."

My question to all who read this, "Do you believe the Lord Who died for all men takes pleasure in announcing eternal condemnation to those who reject Him?" By the same token, "Do you believe His servants, those who live next door and try to teach you the word of God, take pleasure in passing along the announcement of such He has left for us by way of the Holy Spirit Who revealed His word in the Bible?"

Surely you realize, Jesus has enlisted them in His army. They wear the armor of God (**Eph. 6:10ff**) and are trying to encourage you to join those forces before it is everlastingly too late.

They are trying to help you avoid the fate of those mentioned above. Could this serve as a reminder?

## The Comparison Trap

By Tim Jennings

The human ability to detect differences is astounding! In an instant, we can discern how a person feels by the slightest fall of their eyebrow or upward curve of their lip. We can distinguish between thousands of colors. We can feel the smallest scratch on that smart phone we just paid too much for.

When used correctly our ability to notice what is different protects us from danger and can inspire us to tremendous growth (1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Pet. 5:3; 1 Tim. 4:12; Heb. 13:7; 1 Cor. 16:15-18). However, our ability to see differences has a dark side. It can drag us into the comparison trap.

Today, we can compare ourselves to others more than ever! Various forms of media confront us with the looks, skills, experiences and possessions of people around the world that are unattainable to most of us. These constant comparisons can lead to a deep sense of despair. Others exploit the platforms of comparison to show others how great they are. As a result, comparing ourselves to others can be more than a trap, it can become our prison.

### Envy

The problem is we slip into the comparison trap without even knowing it. This happened one day to king Saul. David, his newly appointed commander, returned home from a successful campaign against the Philistines. The people poured into the streets to sing songs of joy to the king. However, the lyrics of their anthem struck a dissonant cord with Saul's self-esteem. They sang, *"Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." ... this refrain galled him.* (1 Sam. 18:7). Saul didn't think about the security of the nation, the skill of David or the kindness of the women. Every good thing was hidden behind the thick cloud of comparison. So, the next day Saul tried to pin David to the wall with a spear.

Harmful comparison has a way of spoiling relationships, because envy sneaks in. Comparison becomes the sin of envy when we cannot appreciate the beauty, happiness or success of another person without immediately connecting it to us. Then resentment seeps in and anger begins to boil until our relationship is cooked!

In addition, comparisons can cause us to be obsessed with our limitations. Maybe David was a better soldier than Saul. So what? There will always be someone thinner, richer, smarter and better looking than you. Get used to it! If someone is good, that doesn't make you bad. Don't allow comparisons to cause you to focus on your limitations. God wonderfully gifted you to do what only you can do. So, do the best with what you have

(Matt. 25:14-30). Otherwise the comparison trap will drive you into a fruitless life of bitter seclusion.

### Compromise

The problem of comparison starts early in the story of Saul. The people said, *"We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations"* (1 Sam. 8:19-20). Later, Samuel calls this request a *"rejection of God"* (1 Sam. 10:19). They wanted to be like the other nations rather than God's nation. This exposes another problem with making comparisons. It often leads to sinful compromise!

We compare ourselves to what others have and we compromise our commitment to God to get it. How constant and subtle is this temptation!? We crave what others possess and slip into greed. We love what someone wears and fall into sensuality. We long for the fun others experience and drop into hedonism. We remove the bait of the comparison trap when we see the danger of evaluating things by external appearances. God is not so impressed with the wrapping paper as we are. *"The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart"* (1 Sam. 16:7).

The next time you are so impressed with someone stop and ask, "Why do I find this so appealing?" If the answer reveals a fleshly appeal, say to yourself, "I value the condition of the heart, the destiny of my soul, and the pleasure of my Lord." Then the temptation to compromise will begin to melt away.

### Arrogance

The most dangerous aspect of the comparison trap is it makes us arrogant. One of the first things Saul did as king was, *"set up a monument to his own honor"* (1 Sam. 15:12). Saul carefully crafted his "news feed" to show that he was a little better than you (1 Sam. 15:30). We fall into the comparison trap when we gain our self-worth by thinking we are better than others. We brag, boast and post to be known and admired. The comparison game can cause us to be over-impressed with ourselves and blind to our defects.

Jesus told a story about a man who arrogantly compared himself to others and thought, "I'm really something special" (Luke 18:11). But another man compared himself to God and prayed, *"Have mercy on me, a sinner"* (Luke 18:13). When we compare ourselves to others, we are tempted to be proud. When we compare ourselves to God, we see ourselves more clearly. The next time you are tempted to think, "I'm better than them," remind yourself, "God knows the real me; the selfish, ugly, hurtful me. Thank you, God for your mercy. Help me share it with others."

Defining our self-image by comparing ourselves to others is a dangerous game. It is a path filled with

despair, deception and pride. It's time to get out of the comparison game and find your identity in Christ. In him, you'll find a love beyond comparison.

*"Let all that you do be done in love."* (1 Cor. 16:14)

## KINGS AND KINGDOMS

There are not many kings and queens in the world today. Perhaps, we Americans pay some attention to England and Queen Elizabeth; at least we are forced to because of the media. Yet, there is constant debate in the British empire about whether or not the monarchy needs to be abolished.

The fact is, we do not have a true understanding of what it is like to live under a king. Our forefathers living before the American Revolution may have understood, but we probably do not.

But what. about the King of Kings? Do we need to understand who He is? Do we need to understand what it means to live under His rule? Yes! The *kingdom of God* basically refers to the leadership of a king, the rule and reign of a king, the exercise of the power of a king. We sometimes use people, realm, territory, laws, etc., to describe kingdom. But the exercise of power, of kingly power, gets closer to Biblical teaching about a king and his kingdom. Focus on the *rule of God and you can't go wrong*.

In the OT, *kingdom* sometimes refers to earthly kingdoms. *"For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die"* (1 Samuel 20:31). This passage tells Jonathan that the seed of Jesse (David) would succeed to the throne; Jonathan would not be king (see 1 Chronicles 12:23; 1 Kings 2:12). While territory was involved, the focus needs to be on kingly authority. Take the time to study the book of Daniel, particularly king Nebuchadnezzar, and you will find references to his power and his kingdom, which obviously did involve a geographical territory. Yet, physical boundaries did not assure allegiance to the king. *Respect* for the king's *rule* established the correct boundaries.

The NT contains references to a king and kingdom in the secular sense of those terms. *"Therefore He said: A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading"* (Lk. 19:12,15). The ten horns mentioned in **Revelation 17** refers to earthly kings.

God is always a king. The fact that He is *the king* says that He is reigning. *"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted*

*up, and the train of His robe filled the temple...So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts" (Isaiah 6:1, 5).* God is not an earthly king. Yet, His kingdom includes this world in which you and I live. It includes the kingdoms of men and the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. For our salvation and spiritual benefit, the kingdom of God must include you and me. Does it?

**Randy Harshbarger**

## What I learned by Fasting, 2

Fasting can be an interesting experience. As I said in last week's column, my experience and efforts with it were related to health concerns, specifically weight and diabetes, but that shouldn't blind us to spiritual lessons we can observe during the process. For example, last week I mentioned observing how much of my activity was conducted by habit: some good, some neither here nor there and some bad which need to be addressed. That is a spiritual lesson.

This week I want to point out that we can have far more control over our body and its desires than we ever thought possible. If you had mentioned going without food for three days to me last year at this time I'd have scoffed. But now, since I've actually done that and know what to expect it doesn't bother me at all. Paul said in **1 Corinthians 9:26**, *"Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified."* Paul was saying that we are in control of our bodies, not the other way around. This is true of eating, which is good and wholesome and necessary, but it is also true of the desire for physical relations and many other areas. YOU are in control and YOU WILL be held accountable for your actions, or lack thereof (**James 4:17**). The old excuse, "I just can't help myself!" just doesn't cut it. You can, and you must.

Paul said in **2 Timothy 1:6**, *"For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline."* Defeatism comes from Satan, not God.

**Cleveland R. Reddinger Jr.**

## Congratulations to:

**Aaron Blount and Jade Miller**

They will be married on Saturday, March 16, 2019. We rejoice in this union. We know and love them dearly and pray for both the best of this life and even more so eternal life to come.



*Let us be reminded to pray for those we support who are preaching in other areas of this country and also of the world. Remember to pray for Kyle Bennett in Boston Ma., Matt Hodge in Marshfield, Mo. and Cleveland Reddinger in El Dorado, Ks. Overseas we need to remember, Wilfredo Pelino and Jonathan Sapitula in the Philippines as well as Moses Tivane in Mozambique.*

## **HOURS OF WORSHIP**

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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**PSALMS - RON PECK - TEACHER**

**WEDNESDAY - HEAVEN AND HELL**  
**JIM STAUFFER - TEACHER**

**SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:**  
**GIVE GOD YOUR BEST - MAL. 1**  
**BILL MILLER**



## ***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