

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



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

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18

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MAKING OUR MINDS UP

Mark White

There have been many sermons, classes, articles and other exhortations on the subject of “giving.” If you have been a member of the church for some length of time, it is likely you have heard instruction on this important, but sometimes unappreciated, theme. Because giving is a Bible subject, and an expectation God has of His children, it is good to hear what the Lord has to say and to practice what He has taught, as we set aside a portion of our income for the weekly collection taken for the Lord’s work. However, we must emphasize that the decision as to how generous one is with such contributions is purely a personal one. No one can regulate, nor require of you a certain amount to be given. It is a matter of each of us making up our own minds to be good givers, aiming to please the Lord with our offerings.

Second Corinthians 9:7 weighs in directly on this question— *“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”* (NKJV) The word “purposes” is an important word. According to BAG Greek-English Lexicon, it means “as he has made up his mind, 2 Corinthians 9:7” (p. 709). Do you see the point? If we are going to be the type of giver who pleases God and blesses the church, we are going to have to once and for all make up our minds to give. Many non-giving Christians fail in their giving right at this starting point. They either never give, or give sporadically, because they have not fully decided to make this a budgetary priority. Preachers, teachers, elders and even parents need to keep on teaching about this subject. But, until we each make a personal decision to be generous givers, we will be ignoring or working against those good Bible lessons we are hearing on the subject.

What Can Help Me Make Up My Mind?

Keep in mind that Christians have been purchased with something far more valuable than silver and gold. Christians have been redeemed by something far greater than animal sacrifices. *“It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins”* (**Heb. 10:4**). *“You know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain way of life ... but with the precious blood of Christ”* (**1 Peter 1:18-19**).

Remember also that our giving is a true indicator of just how much of ourselves we are willing to give away to the Lord. *“And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave themselves to the Lord...”* (**2 Corinthians 8:5**). Are we aware that the word “gave,” according to Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon means: “...I give myself up as it were; an hyperbole for disregarding entirely my private interest, I give as much as ever I can” (p. 146). This means that Paul was saying of those in Macedonia (**8:1**) that they were completely and entirely giving themselves over to the Lord. Leaving personal desires behind, they mostly wanted to please the Lord! They made up their minds to acknowledge that they belonged to God.

God is concerned with what we give of course, but He is equally concerned with the attitude behind our giving. An appreciative person is a generous giver, but even a generous contribution from a stingy heart is of no eternal value to the giver. It would do us all good to think about our giving.

~via Cy-Fair Family News and Notes ; Cypress, Texas

“Fervent in Spirit”

Acts 18 introduces us to “*a certain Jew named Apollos,*” who was “*an Alexandrian,*” “*an eloquent man,*” and “*mighty in the Scriptures*” (**verse 24**). He “*had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus*” (**verse 25**). Initially, Apollos “*knew only the baptism of John*” (**verse 25**), but he was taught the need for baptism in the name of Christ by Aquila and Priscilla (**verse 26**), and became a fervent proclaimer of the Gospel (cf. **verses 27-28; 1 Cor. 3:5-6**).

The phrase “*fervent in spirit*” used to describe Apollos is an important phrase. In **Romans 12:11**, the Holy Spirit says this phrase should be true of each of us. Speaking of things we should and should not be, He says: “*not lagging in diligence; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord,*” The Greek word translated “*fervent*” in both **Acts 18:25** and **Romans 12:11** is the root of the word often translated “*zeal*.” This word literally means “*to boil with heat, be hot*” (*Thayer*; see *Strong G2204*). It is used metaphorically at times to refer to one who is so passionate about something that it could be said he or she is “on fire.” Apollos had this much passion for the Lord.

The *lukewarm* church at Laodicea exemplified the more common approach to the will of God. They were rebuked for their spiritual apathy, and the Lord commanded them, “*Be zealous therefore, and repent*” (**Rev. 3:19**). Serving God is not something to be lukewarm about. The Laodiceans needed to get “on fire” for the Lord. While fervency is commanded, it must be properly directed. Misdirected zeal is a recipe for disaster.

Before he was converted, the apostle Paul [mis]directed his zeal toward persecuting Christians (**Phil. 3:6**), and thus persecuting *Christ* (**Acts 9:4-5**). Speaking of his actions before his conversion, Paul said in **Galatians 1:14**, “*I advanced in the Jews’ religion beyond many of my own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*” Pre-conversion, his life was a prime example of what it means to “*have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge*” (**Rom. 10:2**).

These passages not only show how it’s possible to be zealous for something, yet be wrong; they show how it’s possible to be zealous *for God*, yet be entirely wrong. God wants us to be zealous for good works (**Titus 2:14**), based on what *His Word* tells us is a good work (cf. **2 Tim. 3:16-17**). The many contradicting beliefs and practices among those who claim to be Christians today indicates that many in our time have a zeal for God that’s not according to knowledge. God’s Word doesn’t contradict itself.

While zeal without knowledge is a recipe for disaster, knowledge without zeal is no better. Scripture teaches that in his zeal, Apollos “*powerfully refuted the Jews, publicly showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ*” (**Acts 18:28**). Apollos passionately acted upon the knowledge he gained concerning Jesus.

Like Apollos, we must be fervent in spirit to please the Lord.

Michael Hickox

What we are in the dark

Kenny Chumbley

“*Son of man . . . do you see what the sheikhs of Israel are doing in the dark?*” **Ezekiel 8.12**

Oliver Wendell Holmes said that in every man there are three men: the man we think we are, the man others think we are, and the man God knows us to be.

God had given his prophet a vision of Jerusalem, and what Ezekiel saw was a city saturated with idolatry (**vv 3,14,16**). In **v 8**, Ezekiel is told to dig through a wall. He does so and breaks into a room with disgusting, idolatrous art painted on the walls. But the prophet sees something else: the elders of Israel, who publicly posed as devout, orthodox Jews, privately prayed to idolatrous abominations. They weren’t what people thought them to be.

Good men often recognize a contradiction between what they are publicly and what they’re capable of privately. Try as they might, at times they lapse into things outrageous, whether in thought or deed. The better their vision of the Lord, the more they recoil from what they know themselves to be.

But some men make a career out of appearing to be what they aren’t. (Isn’t this what politics is all about?) Publicly, they tithe mint, anise, and cumin; privately, they are unjust, unmerciful, and unbelieving. Like the old book says, “*They feared the Lord, yet served their own gods*” (**2 Kgs.17.33**). This is why Pharisees (who appeared so religious) were left out of the kingdom, and publicans and prostitutes (the moral scum) were let in—deep in their sin-stained souls, they had a genuine love for God (**Lk. 18.9–14**).

“*Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord sees in the dark*” (**1 Sam. 16.7**).

kenny

God's Plan

Bill Walton

In the first century, God's plan for saving the lost and caring for the saved was made known through the apostles and put into practice by the disciples. God's plan was simplicity itself. And its success was the marvel of all the world. The gospel was sent to the lost. The poor and needy were cared for. And the church was edified.

How was the gospel sent to the lost? By congregations (**1 Thessalonians 1:2-8**) and individual Christians (**Galatians 6:6**) supporting evangelists to carry the gospel message all over the world, and by every faithful Christian "*who (would) teach others also*" (**2 Timothy 2:2**).

How were the poor and needy cared for? By each congregation caring for its own needy saints (**Acts 4:34-35, 1 Timothy 5:16**) and receiving help from other congregations when needed (**Romans 15:25-26**), and by each individual Christian "*doing good unto all men*" as there was opportunity (**Galatians 6:10**).

How was the church edified? By the elders of each congregation "*feeding the flock of God which is among them*" (**1 Peter 5:2**), and by Christians "*exhorting one another*" and "*provoking one another unto love and good works*" (**Hebrews 10:24-25**).

This plan is tried and proven. It worked in the first century, and it will work in the twentieth century. We do not need a new plan. We do not need an improved plan. But we do need renewed zeal for executing God's plan. That's what makes Christianity unique.

~via Northside Proclaimer; Hillsboro, Ohio.

The pardon, like the life which results from it, is a free gift (**Romans 6:23**). It cannot be bought! Earned! Stolen! The sinner pays no part of the ransom price; that is fully paid by Jesus. Repentance is not part of the ransom price. Sinners can offer no ransom. Their repentance is repentance in view of sin. One doesn't repent unless he sins. His contrition presupposes sinfulness. Godly sorrow in view of sin doesn't obliterate sin. The penitent sinner is a penitent sinner! There is no merit in repentance! There is no earning power in the obedience of a sinner. If the sinner will not repent there can be no forgiveness; but while repentance must be present, or there is no

forgiveness, repentance earns nothing! It lays hold on the free gift fully paid for by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Faith, in our discussion, is the sinner's hand reaching out to receive that which is offered to him in Christ.

Jim McGuigan

Cleanliness, Godliness

For a parent to require a child to wash his face and keep his body clean and not require him to learn and obey the Bible, is to teach him the body is worth more than a pure heart and clean spirit. For a parent to require a child to learn spelling and reading and not require him to study the Bible is to teach him that it is much more important to be qualified to live in this world than to be fitted to live in heaven.

- by David Lipscomb

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We believe in worshiping and serving the Lord as He has instructed in His word.

Did God reveal it in His word or did man imagine it in his mind?

People are born as homosexuals and therefore it is from God and should not be condemned.

Consider the following passage of Scripture:

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11 NAS95)

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

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Bible Classes: Sunday Morning -

I, II, III John - Bill Miller

Wednesday Evening - **Titus** - Jim
Stauffer

Sunday Sermon: **There's a Great
Day Coming**



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