

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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A WORLD WITHOUT GOD COMPLAINS

by Jim Stauffer

Recent events have many people upset and clamoring for punishment of individuals and the passing of new laws that will in all likelihood accomplish little. The terrorist in New York, the maniac in Texas have some people believing if we pass some more laws to limit the renting of trucks or the purchase of guns we can actually stop an evil person from perpetrating evil.

The only way you prevent evil people from conducting evil activities is to eliminate the evil from their hearts.

Let's begin with a discussion of the recent charges of sexual advances by prominent citizens and see if we can determine what is going wrong. Harvey Weinstein, Louis CK and many other Hollywood types as well as a politician here or there have been accused of serious violations of the rights of the women they have pursued. Why all the sudden hullabaloo? The "casting couch" in Hollywood has been here for a long long time.

But you say, these men have broken the rules. They have done so by making advances to women who along with the rest of Hollywood and most of our society believe it is acceptable for two consenting adults to have sex outside the marriage relationship. Now, much later than the acts occurred we have women coming forth to say this was not consensual. The first question to ask is, "Why did you not say something at the time?" Many very weak excuses are given. Let me raise this question to you. How many people who believe sexual activity is only proper between a married couple would allow someone to coerce them in any way to have sex with them? If someone tried to pressure you into having sex with them, you would most likely clearly without any fear of misunderstanding, tell them NO! If they pursued it further you would report them to whatever authority was appropriate.

We say they have broken the rules, but what rules have they broken? Who made those rules? The society that has given its approval with a wink and a nod to

premarital and extramarital sex has set the rule on how aggressive one can be in pursuing it. Now no one at any age in history will find rape acceptable. But the problem here is that adult women are promised favors in return for sex and then have regrets years later. So the debate has then become over what is the meaning of consensual and how do we determine when someone has stepped over the line. Please do not get the idea I am in some way defending these men who have no doubt perpetrated evil deeds. My point is that society has enabled them by giving its consent to what is in actuality illicit sex to begin with. These men had no moral right to have sex with these women and even if it had been consensual it would have been evil. But defining consensual reminds one of the line by a recent President of our country who said, "It depends on what the meaning of is, is."

What should the rules be and who should set them? God set the rules long ago when he said, *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

(Gen. 2:24). Then Jesus said, *Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

(Mat. 5:27,28). Now suddenly society wants to say it is acceptable for a man to lust after a woman and therefore it is acceptable for her to dress and conduct herself in a way that encourages that. And with those factors in play, we act surprised when someone crosses the line of what we perceive to be appropriate decorum.

The fact is, we have rejected the original rules given by the Lawmaker Who is innately righteous. Then having done so, we want to complain about the negative results that follow.

We have decided not to listen to God. Much like Judah prior to its punishment by God, we have said the same thing, *As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of Jehovah, we will not hearken unto*

thee. (Jer. 44:16) This means we will reap what we sow as Paul told the Galatians (Gal. 6:7). Or as Hosea put it, *...they shall sow wind and they shall reap the whirlwind...* (Hos. 8:7).

The principle is the same with so many evil deeds by terrorists and maniacs. We as a society have diminished the value of life by simply saying a person can abort the birth of a baby for any reason she may choose. Once we decide we as mankind have the power over life itself, why are we surprised when men decide to use the threat of death to further their cause or gain revenge on those they hate?

We have kicked God out of every meaningful aspect of life. Our schools are no more than bastions of atheism blatantly pounded into the heads of our youth every day. We teach them irrational thoughts like something as complex as the entirety of the universe, including the human body, came about as some sort of accident while accepting the fact a Rolex watch had to be designed.

We have kicked God out of our lives and now we insist on having the Garden of Eden He gave us, even while telling Him no thanks.

It just doesn't work that way. As Momma always said, "We made our bed, now we have to sleep in it."

When We Suffer

Randy Harshbarger

"Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble" (Job 14:1). It is the fate of humanity to suffer. In various ways, in various forms, at different times—we all suffer. It seems that some suffer more than others. Job is an example of someone who suffered greatly. We sometimes say about someone we know: "It just seems like they can't catch a break." We know what that means; it means that some people have an inordinate amount of trial and tribulation in their lives. How are we to react when we hear the words "cancer," "car wreck," "plane crash," "operation," "treatments," or, "no hope?"

Suffering can (should) cause us to think about the fact that we will die—if not today then someday. *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). The wise man said that finally we *"all go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust"* (Ecclesiastes 3:20). Suffering can cause us to evaluate our lives; are we ready to die and meet the Lord? The Apostle Paul was ready. For him, it was *"far better"* to depart; such departure meant he would be with the Lord (Philippians 1:21). If you knew because of human suffering that your time to depart was getting closer, would you not begin to think about making peace with that fact? And are you at peace with God?

Suffering can cause us to experience the power and

presence of God in a more meaningful and deeper way than before. When Job was suffering, he thought often about God. It is not that Job received all the answers he desired to his many questions. It was, though, an opportunity to focus on the bigger picture of life. Admittedly, when you are in pain it is not always easy to look beyond the present into the future. But can we not find peace and solace in the fact that we know God? *"You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore"* (Psalm 16:11). If joy is deep seated; all is well in your relationship with God.

Suffering can help us realize our need for others. The Hebrew Christians were encouraged to remember their brethren who were in adverse circumstances (Hebrews 13:3). Paul was concerned about Epaphroditus, who was sick *"almost unto death"* (Philippians 1:27). Christians do not (should not) live their lives in isolation from each other. "One another" Christianity has a very practical benefit for all in the body of Christ.

Finally, in the midst of suffering we can turn to God in prayer. When you are having trouble, there are many Christians who are praying for you. Prayer is powerful. Prayer is doing something. Prayer takes you and your needs before God's throne. We pray in recognition of God's authority. *"If you ask anything in My name, I will do it"* (Jn. 14:14). When praying let us say: *"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will"* (Matt. 26:39).

*~via Stallings Drive; Nacogdoches, Texas.
Taken from Market Street Messenger, Athens, Al.*

Don't Confuse the Two

Sometimes there are two very similar concepts we get confused in our minds, sometimes with very bad results. For example take the ideas of self-respect and arrogance. We often see a person who will allow themselves to be taken to the bottom of the pit, so to speak, and we want to ask them if they don't have any self-respect? If they did they wouldn't allow others to treat them the way they do. They wouldn't be a doormat. There is nothing wrong with a healthy dose of self-respect. We are made in the image and likeness of a loving God, **Genesis 1:26ff**. That makes us far and away better than the mere animals. Not only that but this loving God sent His only-begotten Son to die in our stead that we might be saved. We have great dignity as a result of these two facts!

There is the other extreme, however, which is called arrogance where a person thinks more highly of themselves than they have any right to think. The apostle Paul said in **Galatians 6:3**, *"For if a man*

thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." This is the person who thinks that they never do anything wrong or, more in context, the person who thinks they would never give into the temptation to do wrong and so look down on the person who has fallen and needs forgiveness. We are often warned about this, especially in the book of **Proverbs (8:13; 11:2; 13:10; 14:3; 16:18; 21:21; 29:23)**. Men should have no room for arrogance in their character.

The proper way to think of ourselves is the path of soberness. The word simply means to see things as they are in reality, without distortion.

Cleveland Reddinger

Callused By Our Culture

"It doesn't fit my hand!" That was the excuse an old friend would always offer whenever there was a job that required a shovel, rake, or hoe. Well, in reality, such tools don't fit anyone's hand. The evidence of this fact is seen in the soreness and blisters that appear when these implements are first employed. But, if you stick with it, you can get over the irritation. In fact, seasoned workers develop calluses from their prolonged exposure. They no longer feel the pain. Calluses, you see, result in a reduced sensitivity to the things that would normally cause an unpleasant reaction.

There is a spiritual parallel to the scenario we have just described. However, in this realm it is a hurtful rather than helpful phenomenon. It goes like this: A Christian is in repeated contact with the elements of this world. The immorality, violence, vulgarity, immodesty, sensuality and wickedness of society are an affront to his spiritual sensitivities. He is troubled by what he sees -- it hurts him. But, little by little, he begins to grow hardened to this irritation. Oh, yes, he still recognizes sin, but somehow it just does not torture him quite so much when he sees it. At first, for instance, he would turn off a TV program in disgust when sex or bad language was aired. But now, because of his prolonged exposure to such things, he can sit right through it -- taking it all in -- and in the process growing even more callused to the wickedness he sees. Gradually, he demonstrates less and less discretion about the things he sees and hears, about the places he goes, the things he does, the way he talks, the clothes he wears. You see, his very spiritual being has been altered. He has become callused by the evil culture.

Let us all remain sensitive to the evils around us, and join the Psalmist in saying: *"From thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way"* (Ps. 119:104).

by Greg Gwin

"Adding and Subtracting From the Word: Major or Minor?"

"Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." **Deuteronomy 4:1-2**

The LORD instructed His people;

"...listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe."

(FOR THIS PURPOSE) *"...that you may live, go in and possess the land which He was giving them."*

If they were to be successful in the plans that GOD had in store for them it was necessary that they listen to His instruction and then keep that which He had commanded.

In order to be able to effectively observe the statutes and commandments that the LORD had given them it was essential that they not do 2 things.

1. **It was essential that they not add to the word that the LORD had commanded them...**
2. **It was essential that they not take away from the word that the LORD had commanded them...**

"You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." (Deuteronomy 4:2)

How serious was this admonition?

It's clearly answered in the **text**. If you want to possess the land that I'm giving you, you're going to have to listen so that you will know what you need to obey and if you're going to obey it, you must not add to nor take away from it.

Is this something that we should concern ourselves with?

Does GOD really care whether or not His people add a little something to the command or take a little something away or just make some minor changes to it?

Was the strange fire offered by Nadab and Abihu major or minor in the eyes of GOD? (Leviticus 10:1-2)

When Moses struck the rock rather than speak to it, was that act a major or minor discrepancy in the eyes of GOD? (Numbers 20:6-12)

When King Uzziah decided that he would burn incense to the LORD, was that decision major or minor in the eyes of GOD? (2nd Chronicles 26:16-21)

Jay Dixon, Universitychurchofchrist.org

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.*

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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SUNDAY MORNING = EPHESIANS,
PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS
BILL MILLER - TEACHER

WEDNESDAY EVENING
ISLAM VS. CHRISTIANITY
JIM STAUFFER - TEACHER

SUNDAY SERMON: THE GOOD
MORAL MAN VS. THE MAN OF
GOD



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