

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.

November
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2018

SINCERITY VERSUS TRUTH

by Jim Stauffer

When we are forced to judge any situation these two factors always play a major part in the decision. Sincerity is absolutely necessary for one to please God. The word carries with it a singleness of purpose. An attitude that is uncorrupted by any other purpose or idea. The early Christians were said to be worshipping with*sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.* (Acts 2:46,47) Nothing from the world around them was in any way distracting their hearts and minds from the praise of God.

Yet we know there have been those, even in the Scriptures, who were sincere, that is singleminded, in their efforts to praise and serve the Lord while not doing so according to His word. In every case such as this the sincerity of the individual failed to please God because it was not according to the truth. The situation that comes to mind almost immediately is that of Apollos in Acts 18:24-28. He was still preaching the baptism of John the Baptist and needed correction which was provided by Aquila and Priscilla. Further the apostle Paul encountered in Ephesus some whom Apollos had taught and baptized according to John's baptism and corrected that situation by baptizing them into the name of the Lord. We can indeed fail to keep in its entirety the command of Christ Himself when He said, *"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* (John 4:24) We can err on either side of the equation; sincerely worshipping in error or worshipping in truth without the sincerity of the spirit.

While we can through ignorance err from the truth, sincerity is something we can easily know and recognize in ourselves. So, it is our sincerity that we can most easily address and once that is done, we can move on to verification of the truth in our worship and service of the Lord. If we do not attempt to verify the truth of our practices, we certainly cannot claim

sincerity. John makes this point clear, *"The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;"* (1 John 2:4). It is easy to reach this point according to Paul who warned Timothy about some who would prefer to hear pleasant words, *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."* (2 Tim. 4:3-4)

To be prepared for just such situations, Paul admonishes Timothy to, *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."* (2 Tim. 2:15) We see the presence of both truth and sincerity in Peter's statement about the brethren in 1 Pet. 1:22, *"Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,"*

So, how do we exercise this diligence in concern for our own soul, that which Jesus says is of greater value than the whole world? (Mat. 16:26) It is not to be found on social media. It is not to be found in the wisdom of the world. When Jesus spoke to those who followed Him and were believing His message, He told them, *"and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."* (John 8:32) He later taught them the source of that truth, *"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'" (John 14:6)*

Folks, we must learn what Jesus meant in the Sermon on the Mount, *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."* (Mat. 7:7-8) We must value the truth, that is the message of Christ to such an extent that we allow nothing to separate us from it. The Proverb says, *"Buy*

truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding." (Pro. 23:23) Can we understand the value of the truth? It is what will save our soul, our most valuable possession. It is represented by Christ Himself as the way to the Father.

And the bottom line is this. If we claim to seek the truth but persist in worship and service not taught in Scripture, we cannot claim to be sincere. Our worship is not pure or singleminded or unadulterated. Therefore, we have no expectation it will please God. A thorough study of the Scriptures as the Bereans did will let us know the truth (**Acts 17:11**).

GOD'S WAY

The problem of disinterested people is not new. It existed in some places even in the first century. Paul said it existed in Corinth. *"For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:22-23).*

Paul had the power to offer signs to the Jews and the knowledge to compete with the Greeks in worldly wisdom. The philosophy described above would have suggested advertisement of a lecture on "The Judaistic Philosophy in the Roman World." Obtaining his audience with this, he could then slip in a little about Jesus and the cross. But this was not Paul's approach, as he told us: *"For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).* Human philosophy and human wisdom had no place in Paul's plan for saving the lost in Corinth.

Preaching only the gospel, of course, Paul could have announced himself as "Dr. Paul, graduate of the University of Gamaliel, noted author, world traveler, inspired and dynamic lecturer." Rather, he says, *"And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God ... I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:1, 3-5).*

Worldly appeals simply cannot save lost men. And to attach them to the gospel is to cheapen the good news of Jesus Christ. By such appeals we may increase numbers and even "make waves," but such individuals in the local church are liabilities rather than assets. As materials in God's building they are classified as *"wood, hay, and straw."* Paul warns against building such material into the church: *"According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it Now if any man builds on the*

foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work" (1 Corinthians 3:10, 12, 13).

by Sewell Hall; Taken from Beacon Electronic Edition, Columbia, Tn.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH?

"The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches" (Revelation 1:20). The Apostle John pictures the church as a lampstand. It is easy to see that the purpose of the church is to let the light of the gospel shine forth— shine forth into a world of darkness; and shine forth in our lives as followers of Christ. After all, that is what the church is—the church is people who are dedicated to Jesus. The light of the gospel dispels the darkness of sin and error. Every person in the world needs this light; will we give it to them? Jesus said: *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house" (Matthew 5:14-15).* A congregation of Christ's people should be concerned about reaching lost people with the light of God's word.

The book of Revelation was written in symbolic language—sometimes called apocalyptic literature. The message of Christ would be obscure to unbelievers; yet, Christians who received the Revelation would be able to understand through inspired teaching and even familiarity with, for example, the OT (there are many OT references in Revelation). Because there were more than seven churches in Asia, the better idea is to understand that the seven churches (remember, seven in the perfect number in apocalyptic literature) represent all of the churches that belong to Christ. It may be that these churches are representative of all kinds of churches—then and now. The point to remember, though, is that the church is to let its light shine.

"The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." The word angel means *messenger*. It seems that these letters were addressed to the messengers of the churches; they in turn, would then deliver and probably read each respective letter to the congregation. To extend the lampstand and star connection, the focus is on spreading the word of Christ. Certainly God's people needed to hear both commendation and condemnation; doing good and correcting wrong was (and is) needed. But getting the

word out into the world in order that it might find good hearts is paramount for the Lord's church.

Can we today, as a congregation of Christ's people, get His word "out there?" What is stopping us?

Revelation 1:11 says: *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, and, What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."* Christ is with us. He is here. Can we not with His help do His will? Can we not find the motivation to go forth and share His word with the lost world? Or, has our lampstand been removed?

Randy Harshbarger

An Eye for an Eye

Many folks, well-meaning in almost all cases, will see one person retaliate against another and say, "Well, in the Bible it says "an eye for an eye", doesn't it?" And the answer obviously is, "Yes, it does." However, that is not all there is to the question. Peter said in **2 Peter 3:16** that *"the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."* In other words scripture can be used wrongly, just like acetaminophen can, and the result is our own destruction.

The first place it is used is **Exodus 21:23** *"But if any harm follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."* The previous verse mentions the involvement of 'judges' and therefore there is no justification whatsoever for personal retaliation. That has always been forbidden by the word of God. Rather that which is being taught is simply the legal precept "Lex talionis" which means that the punishment should be fitting to the crime in both type and degree. Financial crimes are dealt with financially as in the Old Testament where the offender had to repay fourfold (restoration plus penalty); while violent offenders, murderers and kidnappers, were dealt with violently, almost always given the death penalty. Even in the Old Testament there was a court proceeding involved as indicated by **Exodus 21:22**.

In the New Testament Paul cites this verse and exhorts Christians to *"Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord."* (**Romans 12:19**). God will take care of all things, sooner or later.

Cleveland Reddinger

Dwell on these Things

Jon Banning

In the world today, we are forced to make many (as we would call them) judgment calls. There are issues, especially of a moral nature, that many think we can't be

sure whether they are absolutely right or wrong.

When it comes to modesty we consider it a judgment call. We ask ourselves is this "Ok?" We are forced to make a judgment on where the line should be.

When it comes to the places we go we consider it a judgment call. We ask is it really "Ok" for me to go here and there? When it comes to the music we listen to, the movies we go see and the TV programming we watch we consider those judgment calls. Is it "Ok" for me to see, hear or watch this?

Do you find yourself making judgment calls like these on a daily basis? If so, how do we usually determine whether or not it is right or wrong? If we are using anything other than the Word of God we are doing something wrong. **Philippians 4:8** gives us the perfect remedy to the gray areas in life. Whenever we face something "questionable" we can look to **Philippians 4:8** to determine which judgment I should make. *"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things."*

That is the criteria! When we face a judgment call, before we do anything else, we need to figure out if it matches up with **Philippians 4:8**. What we will come to find is that almost all of the time these questionable decisions aren't so questionable, they are just flat out wrong. As we go out today, for every "judgment call," let's make sure we consider the word of God and **Philippians 4:8** to help us do what is right in the sight of the Lord.

Taken from eastendcoc.org

God's Cake

A young lady is telling her Mother how everything is going wrong, she's failing algebra, her boyfriend broke up with her and her best friend is moving away.

Meanwhile, her Mother is baking a cake and asks her daughter if she would like a snack, and the daughter says, "Absolutely Mom, I love your cake."

"Here, have some cooking oil," her mother offers.

"Yuck," says her daughter. "How about a couple raw eggs?" "Gross, Mom!" "Would you like some flour then? Or maybe baking soda?" "Mom, those are all yucky!" To which the mother replies: "Yes, all those things seem bad all by themselves. But when they are put together in the right way, they make a wonderfully delicious cake!"

God works the same way. Many times we wonder why He would let us go through such bad and difficult times. But God knows that when He puts these things all in His order, they always work for good! We have to trust Him and, eventually, they will all make something wonderful! Here's hoping your day is a "piece of cake!"

—Anonymous-- Taken from Lincoln Bible Reader

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 Arao Uchaio, Francisco Vascob in Mozambique.

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Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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CHRIST IN YOU
JIM STAUFFER - TEACHER

SUNDAY SERMON:

GOD GIVES LIFE



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