

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

Anno Surface 2010

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

July
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AM I APPLYING THE PRINCIPLE?

by Jim Stauffer

Jesus taught so much in principle. He usually did so in response to conduct by religious folks who were not practicing the principle. For instance, He chastises the scribes and Pharisees when they value hand washing authorized by the traditions of their fathers and ignored a responsibility to care for their needy parents, something taught by Scripture.

I understand at first blush we say, "Well they placed the authority of men above that of God." And we would be correct in assessing this matter so. But Jesus goes further with His disciples following the confrontation with the scribes and Pharisees by teaching them the principle of being guided by the heart. He says, *"Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."* (Matthew 15:17-20)

What Jesus says here is we are not practicing sound principles when we believe that what goes into the mouth damages more than what comes out of it. The principle is we must begin our teaching and discipline with our hearts. We must concern ourselves first and foremost with the condition of our hearts. If and when we do, we will no longer need to wait and judge the product because the source of the product will be pure.

So, to my question as to whether we are applying the principle; where is our concern? Is it in the argument I can muster in defense of my position or is it in purifying my heart so my position is pure and needs no defense? Or as Jesus says and Luke records, *"The*

good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart." (Luke 6:45) The very next words of the Lord are, *"Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"* (Luke 6:46) The answer is because we have not treasured the proper things in our hearts.

When knowledgeable brethren cannot agree over matters that have no basis in Scripture it is a heart problem. We will always have differences in congregations of the Lord on personal matters. Our personal decisions will vary according to what we believe about temporal life. Is it an issue with me if my brother literally does not eat meat? I am not speaking of this as the religious issue set forth in **Romans 14** where a brother feels he sins when he eats meat. I mean a brother has the right to be a vegetarian and there is no reason it should upset me.

Now let me introduce the idea of suffering loss rather than demanding my right. Paul indicated in **1 Cor. 6**, this should be the choice of a child of God regarding his brother. In reality if two brethren disagree over something that does not affect their salvation, they should both acquiesce to the point the issue disappears.

Is that not the essence of Paul's statement in **Phil. 2:1-4** *"Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for*

your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." If indeed I am practicing this daily, will not the issue between me and my brother disappear? Of course there is the possibility he will not reciprocate. Now what do I do? Am I to practice what the Scripture says only if he does? Of course not! My responsibility is to the Lord above all else. This is a teachable moment for me. I can be the example he needs to see in order to show by contrast his own selfishness. But most of all I can please my Savior by understanding that walking in his steps as I am instructed by the apostle Peter (**1 Pet. 2:21-24**), I will have suffered for another out of love.

Brethren, I submit to you that all the knowledge of God's word one can accumulate over a lifetime is cast aside when we do not take it to heart and become as He was, a suffering servant.

HANNAH, EXEMPLAR OF PRAISE

When I survey the many prayers of praise offered in scripture, few impress me more than Hannah's in **1 Samuel 2:1-10**. Overwhelmed by her childlessness, needled by her sister wife, and comforted by an emotionally deaf husband, Hannah *"was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly"* (**1 Samuel 1:10**). But God heard Hannah, she bore a son, honored her vow, and praised God for it.

For years Hannah's prayer never totally connected with me. Her prayer seemed to bear little resemblance to the events that evoked it. It is not the prayer I would have prayed in her situation ("thanks for finally giving me what I asked for"). But the more I thought about Hannah's prayer, the more I realized the disconnect reflected badly on me, not Hannah. Instead of praying, "look at what God did for me," Hannah's prayer is, "look at who God is!"

Hannah thinks deeply about the character and power of God. She is making realizations about God that go far beyond her situation. *"My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation"* (**v1**). She is awed by God's unparalleled holiness (**v2**), unsearchable wisdom (**v3**), amazing power (**v4**), and unerring justice (**vv9-10**). Her own reversal of fortunes is just one of many examples of God exalting the humble and humbling the exalted (**vv5-8**).

Do you see what Hannah's prayer of praise is about? It's not about her, but God. The answered prayer was not just about getting what she asked for, but what the answer taught her about the God who did

the answering. Hannah thought about what God did in her life and drew much bigger conclusions about what kind of a God he is. Let Hannah teach you how to praise God well...

Good praise comes when we see God's hand in our lives. Do you imagine that such a tremendous prayer of praise would happen if when Samuel was born Hannah said, "how fortunate!" Not a chance. Who or what we attribute the good things in our lives to will determine whether we are capable of offering Hannah-like praise. Am I lucky? Has fate smiled on me? Was it by my genius and boot-strapping effort? No praise follows such thoughts.

Next time some anxiety you've been praying about is put to rest what will you say? "Whew, I'm glad that's out of the way" or will you praise the God of all comfort? Next time a loved one is brought through an illness what will you say? "He pulled through" or will you praise your Creator? Next time a sinner's heart is pricked to repent what will you say? "Glad you finally got your act together" or will you praise the God who sent his Son to seek and save the lost? James said, *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."* If we really believed that, praise would never be far from our lips.

Good praise comes when we live with God. Good praise only comes from one for whom God is a constant companion. He is never far from the center of our thoughts. Assembling to worship is a lifelong habit. God's will is my greatest concern. Do you imagine that Hannah would be capable of offering such a prayer if she wasn't such an earnest seeker of God in the first place? If she were a cultural Jew for whom worship and prayer were empty rituals? Hannah came with her family to worship and sacrifice at Shiloh year after year (**1 Samuel 1:3**). Hannah wrestled with a lot during those years, with "no" as the constant reply to her most earnest request. But even in the frustration and muck of life, Hannah sought God. And then, when the prayer was finally answered, the praise came naturally. Good praise does not come from half-interested religious hobbyists who hold God at arm's length. Good praise always comes from people who live and wrestle with God daily.

Good praise comes when we see that God is up to much more than just attending to my requests. I am most impressed by Hannah's perspective. She saw the big picture. She realized that what God had done for her on a small scale he would do for all creation one day. She realized that if God can do this for her, what can't he do? If God cares about a lowly childless wife from the hill country of Ephraim, who can lie outside

God's sphere of care?

When I get my health back, I must consider that God may be up to more than just attending to my comfort. He has given me life and energy to work for his kingdom (**Philippians 1:23, 24**). When I am forgiven of my sins, I must be more than thankful for God's mercy and forgiveness on an individual level. What God has done for me, he yearns to do for all mankind (**2 Peter 3:9**). The puzzle pieces begin to come together as Hannah sees God's grand project of righting wrongs, rendering justice, and delivering the faithful take shape. Hannah believed in God's providence more than blind luck. Hannah was well prepared to praise God because of the years spent in his service. And when her prayer was answered, she thought in terms of what God was up to in the world beyond the narrow prism of her personal concerns.

Lord help us to praise to you in the manner you deserve.

by Drew Nelson; nelsonac87@gmail.com

WOE ON THE PHARISEES

"But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places. Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it" (Luke 11:42-44 NASV).

Interestingly, Luke often casts the activities and teachings of Jesus in the context of a meal. In Luke eleven, Jesus accepted the invitation for lunch in the home of a Pharisee. The table was set; the food was ready; but Jesus didn't wash his hands before eating, an omission the host notices. While the Pharisee didn't say anything, Jesus knew about him and his Pharisaical insistence on ceremonial purity. Jesus also was concerned about neglected hearts. With great grief at their pretense of religion, Jesus delivered six woes that called out their hypocrisy.

No one enjoys eating food from dishes that appear to be clean, on the outside anyway, and then getting to the end of the bowl or cup, only to find grim and leftover food. The picture is disgusting. Great care is shown for the outside; the inside is neglected. The outside should not be overlooked; vessels should be clean (**Leviticus 11:32-33**). Jesus' greater concern is the heart. A heart

full of robbery and wickedness cannot make the outside clean. Immorality and taking advantage of others indicate a heart that needs cleansing. Jesus says give alms to the poor—show concern for others—this is the kind of heart you need. Tithing or giving a 10th of one's goods comes from OT practices. What good is a 10th if you lack love and mercy? Pride drives people to the best seats in the synagogue. You may sit at the head table, but your pride means more than Jesus does. The Pharisees, so concerned about purity, were walking over graves—graves, symbols of death and uncleanness; these were the hallmarks of their religion rather than true, heartfelt religion. Still, the outside looked OK.

Jesus' wide net insulted a lawyer (scribe). Would all of the religious establishment face Jesus' ire? Yes, because they all needed to repent. Jesus told the scribe to stop insisting that others do what he himself was unwilling to do. While the burdens of the Pharisees (a ship's heavy cargo) might reflect a true interest in being right with the Lord, they were actually unwilling to show true mercy and concern even for their fellow Jews—those who might have been concerned about doing God's will.

The Pharisees teach us this lesson: We can maintain the outward appearance of religion, that is, the outside of the cup looks clean and useful, but in reality, our professions of piety and devotion are empty—empty words and shams. The only way to get the inside of the cup clean is to change the heart. While we are doing that, let us remember that religion practiced *outwardly only* for too long a time can lead to hypocrisy. Does that insult you? Then talk to the scribe. Better, talk to Jesus.

Randy Harshbarger

I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. If it were possible for a created soul fully to 'appreciate,' that is, to love and delight in, the worthiest object of all, and simultaneously at every moment to give this delight perfect expression, then that soul would be in supreme blessedness. To praise God fully we must suppose ourselves to be in perfect love with God, drowned in, dissolved by that delight which, far from remaining pent up within ourselves as incommunicable bliss, flows out from us incessantly again in effortless and perfect expression. Our joy is no more separable from the praise in which it liberates and utters itself than the brightness a mirror receives is separable from the brightness it sheds.

C.S. Lewis.

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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DANIEL - BILL MILLER

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS - BOOK
OF MARK - JIM STAUFFER (BOTH
CLASSES OFFERED ON ZOOM)

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON
(YOUTUBE ALSO)
"I'VE HAD IT; I QUIT"



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