

LENEXA EDIFIER

“and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32)

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Buy Truth or Trivials

Dan Shipley

Many Christians are faced with the problem of choosing a congregation with which to identify themselves.

Regrettably, this important choice is sometimes determined more by trivials than truth. With some, the location and appearance of the church building become influencing factors; with others, the size and friendliness of a congregation are more persuasive. Still, others are swayed by little more than the preacher's personality. In many cases, little, if any, effort is made to determine whether a church is teaching, practicing and standing for gospel truth. That Christians would allow such trifles to determine so serious a matter is almost unthinkable.

The role of the individual Christian in the local congregation is not one to be assumed or considered lightly. This together arrangement is ordained of God, and its activities are governed by His word. Individual responsibilities are not diminished in this union, no matter how large it may become. The Christian is no less amenable to God's truth in this collective arrangement than as an individual. Any truth-determined obligation in reference to the local church or its elders is best understood as being an obligation unto God Himself. Therefore, it is not a matter of being faithful to the church or to its elders, but to God and His truth! In view of this principle, one can easily understand how that members of churches who are led into unscriptural practices by the elders are no less guilty than the elders themselves. Every Christian owes primary allegiance to the great Shepherd and Bishop of his soul (**1 Peter 2:25**). Truth is degraded to trivials in congregations where error is condoned or tolerated. Whether it be in the countenancing of false teachers or ungodly members, truth suffers when sin is allowed. Neither God nor His truth are honored in churches where unqualified men are allowed to continue as elders. Churches do not support human institutions from their treasuries in response to Divine truth. Instead, such truth is being ignored in favor of expedients, human reasoning, sentiment and other such trifles. If God can be honored by individuals in authorized collective efforts, then He

certainly can be dishonored in the unauthorized! Every Christian in every congregation sustains a personal obligation to Divine truth for which an account will be given.

The spiritual strength of individuals and churches is reflected in their regard for gospel truth. The Christian who truly loves and respects this truth should seek to join himself with like-minded brethren. Their meeting place may be remote and modest; the members may be few and plain, but such things are mere trifles compared to the precious truth to which they are dedicated and by which they are bound together — and saved.

Submission to only some of God's truth is not enough. It must be allowed to determine every decision and every duty. The individual who does not submit to ALL truth doesn't submit to truth at all!

~via Plain Talk; Burnet, Texas.

Be Happy

The one who understands a matter finds success, and the one who trusts in the Lord will be happy (Proverbs 16:20)

Some time ago I was watching a documentary on television about people who were having a difficult time coping with certain events in their lives. At one point in the program, someone made the statement that there are a lot of unhappy people in this world. Each day we live we are reminded of how true that statement really is and the truth is that sometimes we find ourselves in situations that trouble us so greatly that we also, at least momentarily drift into a state of unhappiness. The reality of all of this is that not one single one of us is exempt from those adverse conditions that cause us pain, sorrow and disappointment that result in unhappiness. It is not so much a question of will it happen but rather how often will it happen. And when it does happen, how will we respond?

We must realize that we alone do not have the courage, strength or ability to withstand the temptation to wallow in a state of self-pity making ourselves miserable. In those moments we need to, yea must, lift up our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help (**Psalms 121; Psalms 46:1**). Quite often in seeking a measure of strength, comfort and peace. I find myself thinking about passages such as **Isa. 12:2-3; Isa, 40:28-31; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 4:13-16; 2 Cor. 5:1-9**).

If we are going to be happy, we must put our lives into the hand of God under all circumstances (**Psalms 62:5-8**). Let those moments when unhappiness strikes our human frame draw us closer to our God. Study diligently the precious words of **Romans 8:28-39** and let them lift your spirit, put a smile on your face and a gleam in your eye. I pray all of us will ever seek from God's word the strength and courage we need to keep us safe and draw us closer to him each day.

Children of God should be the happiest people on the face of this earth. We have the privilege and honor of being sons of God and should be thanking him every day for his love that makes that possible (**1 John 3:1-3; Gal. 3:26-29**). Our sins have been forgiven; we are washed clean in the blood of Jesus (**Col. 1:12-14**). We have the hope of one day living forever in the wonderful city of God (**John :1-3; 2 Cor. 5:1; Rev. 21:1-5**). Our souls have been purified by obedience to the truth (**Peter 1:22**). We are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people who have been called out of darkness into marvelous light (**1 Pet. 2:9; Col. 1:13**). Why should we not be the happiest people on earth, rejoicing always in the Lord (**Matt. 5:12**)?

Be happy—lean on those everlasting arms of the Lord with a simple, trusting faith always striving to please him in all you say and do. None of us have to be numbered among the unhappy people of this world. Listen to James as he tells us, *"Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and he will lift you up. To God be the glory!!"*

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eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:22-23).

A single eye or a good, sound eye can provide light for the entire body. The result of this illumination is the ability to see, comprehend, recognize, and be sensitive to God and His kingdom. Light enables us to find our way in the darkness of life—there are many dark avenues of temptation and resistance out there. But more, the inability to see clearly makes it difficult to keep our eyes on the true goal of life—heaven, service to Christ, His church, spiritual values, and true commitment.. A sad eye results in spiritual blindness.

What does this have to do with gambling? Just this: Selfishness and materialism give no light at all. When we look at God, we must look without reservation. When our lives are consumed with worldly activities such as gambling, we are unable to focus clearly on the Lord. Worldliness disturbs our vision. The wrong goals in life prevent us from giving our all to the Lord and to the pursuit of His kingdom. **Psalm 123:2** says: *"Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, As the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, Until He has mercy on us."* The slave looks for even the slightest movement of hand from the master. This helps the slave act at the behest of the master; the master may be commanding some action; the slave recognizes the need to totally give self to the master. The Lord directs and provides. How, though, can we recognize His will when we are distracted by worldly activities?

One of the problems with gambling is that it becomes easy to covet the money that (theoretically) can be made from gambling. *"Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5)*. Who would think of themselves as being an idolater? Yet, when our focus becomes the "big prize," we lose sight of God. Materialism becomes our "god." Externals take over our thinking and turn us away from God. In essence, we are saying that we no longer believe that God oversees our lives. Instead of having greater faith in His care, we are going to "strike it rich" and then we will be able to do lots of good works with "our money." We say: "God helps those who help themselves." The Bible says: *"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He*

GAMBLING # 4 What Are We Looking For?

"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your

Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Randy Harshbarger

Hammering Hank At The Plate

It is really amazing to see how many people get distracted from what they had planned to do in life. They establish goals and define them and then get sidetracked by things that have very little value or importance at all.

There's a story told of Yogi Berra, the all-star catcher for the New York Yankees and "Hammering Hank" Aaron, who would one day become the all-time home run leader in major league baseball.

Aaron played for the Milwaukee Braves, who were playing the Yankees in the World Series. Berra was known for his talking to the batters at the plate trying to distract them while they were batting.

As Hank came up to bat, Yogi said, "Henry, you're holding your bat all wrong. You are supposed to be able to see the trademark." But Aaron did not say a word.

On the next pitch Hank knocked it over the left field wall for a home run. And as he crossed home plate he looked at Yogi and said, "I didn't come up here to read!"

To be a successful batter you need to know why you came up to the plate.

David Bouler

Don't Let Yourself Be Distracted

We mention the parable of the sower often, but that is because we cannot overstate how important it is. The thorny soil represents those who hear the word, but they are distracted. They hear and then *"are choked with the cares, riches, and pleasure of life, and bring no fruit to maturity"* (Lk 8:14). Those things are not inherently sinful, but they become sinful when they distract.

The Lord told us that we cannot serve two masters (Matt 6:24). When we are distracted, it is because of our own desires. Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (Gal 5:24). Are you sure you belong to Christ, or do you really desire other things (Mk 4:19). Let us seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

It is not just a one-time thing either. *"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the*

things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Col 1:3 NASB). Jesus said, *"Strive to enter through the narrow gate"* (Lk 13:24). The word strive is the Greek word "Agonizomai" where we get our word "Agonize". It is elsewhere translated as fighting and laboring (1 Tim 6:12 & Col 4:12). Woe unto the soldier or farmer who is distracted!

Anything can distract us and when it does, we must lay it aside (Heb 12:1). Do not let the enemy distract you, with sin, or anything else. He will if he can. He will if you let him. Keep your eye on the ball.

John Hines

Re-Stating an Abiding Principle

We have now a plain work - simply the work of the Lord and no other. We have nothing to preach but the gospel, nothing to believe but the truth of God, nothing to do but the will of God, and nothing to hope for only what is promised in the word of God. Our work is not new and untried, but old, well tried, and nothing can stand before us. We have truth and righteousness to maintain - sin and the world to oppose. We can make change only at our peril - no departure without losing all. We started simply to be the people of God, and to give ourselves unreservedly to the Lord. We can not turn away.

by Benjamin Franklin

(gospel preacher, 1812-1878)

Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal." Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." (John 6:26-29)

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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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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