

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ~ MAKING DISCIPLES ~ EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY

THE BROAD PATH OR THE NARROW WAY? Discipleship Series 15 By Rayola Kelley

We are coming to the end of the discipleship series. For the last fifteen months, I have been dealing with the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. Clearly, the Christian foundation is simple, yet profound as to the depth it can reach into the soul of man. Sadly, through the years these simple truths have been complicated by man's need to understand a matter according to his personal take on religion and life. This need usually has nothing to do with becoming better Christians, but with controlling one's reality when it comes to God.

It is not unusual for people to put God in a nice controllable box. I thoroughly understand this box. I used to operate within one, and what I discovered is that this box allows people to believe that all is well with their spiritual lives. After all, they have weighed their spiritual life on their own balances, causing them to come out on top. Such an evaluation allows them to continue on their merry way, down the so-called path of personal happiness and bliss.



However, the various tragedies of life have a way of occasionally throwing a wrench into such unrealistic perceptions. Each challenge changes the tint of people's rose-colored glasses, disheveling self-righteous cloaks, ripping away religious masks, and pulling theological rugs from underneath their feet. After all, in ignorance we each can hold on to foolishness, in religious elitism we can hold on to delusion, and in our theology we can remain armchair Christians who maintain a lot of doc-

trines and theories about Christianity, while lacking any real experience, spirit and life in our walk.

When I tried to come to terms with the Christian life, I often had to rethink my former conclusions by divorcing Christianity from all attempts of fitting it into a doctrinal, theological or religious box, to recognizing it as a life that must be lived or walked out according to a law upheld by the Holy Spirit (*Romans 8:2*). This law has to do with bringing forth the life of Christ Jesus, which allows each of us as His followers the means to discover the excellent way of our high calling.

It is hard for people to realize that they are walking in some type of way. Their head, master and the husband they are bound to will determine the way in which they will walk. *Romans 5-7* identifies the type of leadership, service, and point of identification a person is actually giving way to. We know that there are two heads, Adam or Jesus. Head points to what determines our predominate focus, emphasis and agenda. In fact, our heart will naturally follow the direction of our head.

If Adam is our head, the world will serve as our focal point, we will emphasize our rights to partake of it, and our agendas will be to feed or appease the selfishness of the self-life. If Jesus is our head, He will serve as our focal point, we will emphasize the will of God, and the message of Christ and Him crucified will become our sole agenda.

There are two masters, God and sin. Masters determine what we will ultimately serve. If we serve sin, we will end up bowing down to Satan, the god of this world, serving the lusts of our flesh, and walking in the ways of death. If we serve God, we will be worshipping Him in Spirit and truth, obeying His will and ways in humility, and walking in the ways of righteousness.

There are two husbands that we can be bound to, which points to identification. They are the Law or the

risen Christ. If we are bound to the Law, we are walking under a death sentence without any recourse. We will be identified by the ways of our corruptible flesh and we will be walking the broad path of condemnation that leads to damnation.

If we are bound to the risen Christ, we will be walking according to His eternal life in us, identified by His Spirit, and walking in the narrow path of the cross. This narrow path identifies us to the death (cross), burial (putting off the old life), and resurrection power (putting on the new life) of Christ. The narrow path also points to the ways of death. Its hard ways will go deep into our soul in order to bring us higher in our spiritual perspective. Its challenging ways will plant our feet firmly on the path of righteousness.

Jesus talked about these two distinct ways in His Sermon on the Mount. You can clearly see the contrast between the broad way and the narrow path as you follow Jesus' presentation in this sermon. Let us first consider the broad way.

The Lord said of the broad way in *Matthew 7:13* that the gate that leads to this way is wide. In other words, it is capable of embracing anything. It does not require any change of heart, mind and way of doing. Since a person does not have to change, he or she can establish his or her own religious or moral code. Such individuals can walk according to their own deluded reality. The false light of their own darkness will blind them.

These individuals wear a cloak of self-righteousness, convincing themselves that they are right before God, but they walk in unbelief and disobedience. Such people who walk this way can harbor, as well as justify, sin in the name of rights and happiness, hate God and His righteousness for opposing their way, lust after the world, and walk in unforgiveness without feeling any real twinge of conviction. They can give the impression of good intentions that are devoid of godliness. They may have a show of good works, but since their motives are treacherous and self-serving,

such deeds will be considered iniquity on judgment day. These people can prove to be anxious about the things of the world because they lack faith towards God, thereby failing to seek first His kingdom in all matters. They are building their religious lives according to the ways of their corruptible flesh, which is establishing them on the sifting sands of judgment. Even though the broad way seems endless in its possibilities, its sifting foundation will eventually give way to the abyss of eternal damnation.

In *Luke 6:24-26*, Jesus pronounced four woes against those walking the broad way. These woes reveal these people's pursuit, attitude, state, and point of worth. Such individuals pursue the riches of the world, perceive they have no real need since they lack both the reality and sobriety to discern their way as being destructive, and they desire and seek after men's approval and recognition, rather than God. In fact, Jesus warned that many go in the broad way.

This brings us to the narrow path. The popular way is the broad way, but the way that leads to life is a path that proves to be the hard way for unregenerate man. Jesus stated of this narrow way in *Luke 13:24* that many would strive to enter the gate that marks the entryway to this path but fail to do so. According to *Matthew 7:14*, such people will fail to find their way to this path. We must ask ourselves why people fail to enter into the narrow gate that leads to everlasting life. Jesus actually gives us insight into the reason people fail to enter in "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber, John 10:1.*"

Those who are trying to enter through the narrow gate but fail to do so are imposters. They are thieves who are trying to obtain something that they have no right to claim. They are robbers because they want to rob, cheat or steal a heavenly inheritance without having any legal right or identification to it. These people are trying to enter in on their own merits, bypassing the narrow way of redemption. After all, their way is

religious, marked by good deeds, outward piety, and devotion. However, any way that does not line up to the narrow path constitutes the broad way. Granted, the broad way may have been adjusted to embrace religious piety, or personally narrowed down by legalistic or moral codes, but it is still the broad way that represents the ways of death. *Proverbs 14:12* states that there is a way that seems right to a person, but it still constitutes the ways of death.

What does the narrow way entail? After all, few seem to find the real entrance to this hard path that leads to life. Jesus gives us the insight into why people miss the entrance. First of all the gate is marked by an altar that requires sacrifice and death. It calls for repentance that will not only cause the person to cease walking according to the normalcy of the world and old ways of death, but it also requires him or her to walk opposite or contrary to the ways of death.

Past the entrance of the narrow gate is a single door. This door is not identified by religious affiliation, good deeds or piety; rather, it is actually a Person who serves as the only door in which one can discover life. Jesus identifies this door in *John 10:7*, as being Himself.

Jesus summarized His ministry in *John 14:6* by stating He was the way in which all believers must walk, He is the door of truth that each follower must constantly line up to and enter in by way of faith and obedience, and He is the essence of life that must be walked out to ensure reconciliation, restoration and communion with the Father. It is by walking the narrow way that the life of Christ, His lowly disposition, His meek attitude, and His image is worked into us. Clearly, the broad way is comprised of man's way. No matter how religious, noble and restraining it might be, it represents walking in the way of Adam, serving the god of this present world, and being bound to a Law that can only condemn a person. Therefore, either man is walking in his own way according to his desires or he is walking in the way of Christ according to the Word of God.

Although there are those who believe that they have one foot in the broad way and one foot on the narrow path, the harsh reality is that they have

both feet on the broad road. They are simply balancing two lifestyles: that of religion with its outward façade, and that of the world with its philosophies or attractions. As they walk according to the different pattern of these lifestyles, they fail to realize that the stepping stones will eventually shift when the sandy foundation begins to move with the winds of judgment. The reason I say this is that the narrow path is on the same road of life as the broad way. The difference is the way. It is based either on the terrain of the self-life or on self-denial. Its direction is either towards the false glory of the world or towards the light of the world, Jesus. The destination is either leading downward into the quagmire of bondage and spiritual ruin or heavenward to an eternal inheritance. The unattractive narrow path leads in the opposite direction of the popular and well-traveled broad way. When man repents, he does not jump from the broad way to the narrow path, rather he changes the direction he is walking. He ceases to be a child of the devil, twofold a convert of hell, and walking in the ways of condemnation and death. In true repentance, he turns from the old to embrace the new. He becomes a child of God by being born again from above, a consecrated disciple of Jesus through faith and obedience to God's Word, and begins to walk in the ways of everlasting life.

When asked why he would walk away from Christ, a young man stated that Christianity is the hard way. It is important to point out that Christianity is only hard on the self-life, the fleshly appetites, and the bondage of sin. Granted, it cuts across insipid, small-minded comfort zones, challenges people to cease from allowing their lusts simply to carry them like an escalator to their final destination of eternal separation and damnation. On the other hand, it can also serve as a slide that will allow lost individuals the luxury of enjoying the deadly fruits of this world while they delude themselves about the consequences that await them. It is true the narrow path is clearly marked by death and its sole door allows no room for any type of compromise or hypocrisy, but the path was designed to save man from the consequences of traveling his own way of destruction. It becomes a hard way

HOW ARE YOU WALKING, STANDING AND SITTING?

By Jeannette Haley

What goes through your mind when someone says to you, "God bless you?" When you consider God's blessings, what do you equate with those blessings? I am sure that different people have different ideas of what constitutes blessings depending on their frame of reference or perspective. No doubt, many people construe God's blessings as health and wealth, thanks to the widespread preaching of the "prosperity gospel". Others might conclude that blessings are an insulation of sorts against reality, while others may believe that blessings from above indicate how deserving and special they are in the scheme of things. Of course, none of these viewpoints are valid in that they are satanically inspired and worldly in nature, not to mention contrary to what God's Word reveals about His blessings.

God's blessings come with a price. In other words, blessings, like God's promises, are conditional. *Psalm 1:1* says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." This is a powerful verse upon which to meditate concerning the three positions of walking, standing and sitting. Concerning our walk, we can conclude that God is aware of everyone who rejects ungodly counsel in his or her daily walk, or manner of living, which reveals wisdom and depth of character. The influences of ungodly counsel are with us from the cradle to the grave. If a child's parents claim to be Christians, but conduct their lives according to the spirit of this world, the "counsel" they give is ungodly, hypocritical and meaningless because it is not backed up with action. What exactly is the "spirit of this world?" The answer is, any goal, philosophy, lifestyle, emphasis, agenda, or belief system that elevates the flesh, and minimizes, ignores, repudiates, or resists the Spirit of God is of this world.

To me, one of the most inspiring, amazing and miraculous things in our day and age is a young person who is totally sold out to God, and living to

please Him. When you consider the myriad of ungodly influences our youth are continually exposed to—evil assaults and temptations from the enemy through the media, educational system, Hollywood's filth, satanic music, drugs, porn, peer pressure, and political propaganda—it is a downright miracle that any young person can wade through it all and come out making the right decisions. The counsel of the ungodly is to walk in the course of this world, which is the broad path to destruction. This path seems so natural and right. After all, it beckons and calls with enticing promises of fame and fortune. But, *Proverbs 14:12* warns, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Trying to circumvent God's ways is as disastrous as parking on a railroad track in front of a train going 60 mph, or jumping from a jet over the ocean, without a parachute.

Since, in our modern time, ungodly counsel and propaganda continually bombard us, how can we maintain an upright walk before God? The Lord Himself has provided the answer in His Word. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" *John 14:15*. "Keep" means to obey. "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" *John 14:24*. The first thing we must do is to love Jesus. How can we love and obey someone we do not know? If we would know and love Jesus, we must get into His Word, and get His Word into us and spend time with Him in prayer, and worship. As we walk in obedience, we will then experience God's presence in our lives. (*John 14:23*.)

Next, to walk in a godly fashion, we must have the mind of Christ, in all humility. *Philippians 2:5-8*, "Let this mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." *Philippians 4:8* also tells us upon what we are to think. As you study this verse and apply it to your life, you will be amazed at how clearly you can begin to see even the

most subtle deviations from God's character and ways.

Resisting walking in the counsel of the ungodly is impossible if we fail to heed Jesus' words in *Luke 9:23, 24*. He said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." Either we are following after Jesus in our daily walk (manner of living) or we are following after the ungodly counsel of the world, the flesh and the devil. There is no middle ground. After all, how can "two walk together, except they be agreed" *Amos 3:3*? "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other . . ." *Matthew 6:24*.

Finally, the Apostle Paul gives us this incredible insight into his life in Christ in *Galatians 2:20*, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Such a person, one in whom the Spirit of God dwells, will have no inclination or desire to walk in the counsel of the ungodly. Such would be contrary to his or her regenerated heart and soul. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" *2 Corinthians 5:17*. Therefore, we can conclude that if we are to be blessed in our walk, we must walk in the Spirit, not the flesh. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" *Romans 8:14*. Such people are not "walking in the counsel of the ungodly," but rather, walking in the counsel of God. Concerning walking in truth, the Apostle John wrote, "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. And this is love, that we walk after his commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" *2 John 4:4, 6; 3 John 4*. [Emphasis added.] This is a blessed life indeed!

The second admonition in *Psalms* 1:1 concerns not standing “in the way of sinners.” What does this mean? To me, stand conjures up a mental picture of a young person loitering around with purposeless peers, trying to fit in or be one of the gang, and open for anything. Of course, this spells trouble. *Proverbs* 1:15, 16 warns, “My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.” *Proverbs* 4:14, 15 plainly states, “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.”

Another meaning to “stand” is being established or planted on a certain premise, or belief. It gives the impression of belligerence and defiance towards anything that may present a challenge. People in this position are those who, when challenged regarding their attitudes, disposition, or lifestyle, will justify it. People standing in the way of sinners are ready to defend their position, and have no intention of backing down. Jesus said of such, “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved” *John* 3:19, 20.

If a person continually stands with sinners, one can conclude that it is because they agree with them, or are like-minded. After all, “deep calls unto deep” (*Psalms* 42:7). The tragedy is, if a person stands with sinners, he or she will receive the same judgment and condemnation. *Ezekiel* 18:20a declares, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Instead, how much better it is to be standing upon the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul admonished in *Ephesians* 6:14-18, “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication

in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

Concerning evil associations, King Solomon wrote, “My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men” *Proverbs* 1:15; 4:14. These verses remind me of the utter devastation caused by “standing in the way of sinners.” Back in the early 80’s, the brother-in-law of a woman I knew was the head chaplain of the women’s prisons in Arizona. He procured admission passes for us for the women’s prison in the Phoenix area. We went on several occasions as part of his ministry and there we heard more than one tragic story from women incarcerated for terrible crimes because of their evil associations. One was in prison for killing her biker boyfriend in self-defense because he was beating her with chains. Another was incarcerated for being in the company of her boyfriend when he committed a murder. We learned the story behind many ruined lives simply because of the company the women kept. They were in the wrong place, with the wrong people, at the wrong time.

How much better it is to stand established in the way of righteousness and eternal life than to stand with sinners in this life, only to be lost in the next. How blessed is the person who refuses to stand, or be associated, with the ways of the world, the flesh and the devil! *Psalms* 16:8, 9 says, “I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.” Standing in the way of sinners offers no hope. To stand on one’s own concepts, ideas, conclusions and perceptions instead of receiving a love for truth results in delusion and death. (See *2 Thessalonians* 2:10, 11.)

The third part of *Psalms* 1:1 concerns those who sit in the “seat of the scornful.” Here we get a picture of those who have made themselves at home with people who scorn God and His Word. Settled into this position of complacency and judgment, they have no desire for change. *Proverbs*

1:22 gives us this insight into such people: “How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?” The “simple” in this verse means “silly (i.e. seducible): foolish. This is a description of those who lack substance and character, preferring to remain immature, undisciplined, undiscerning, unwise, and vain (worthless). Such are “scorners” who delight in mocking and holding in derision those who are wise, righteous, and walking after God. Such are “fools” who “hate knowledge.”

You do not have to go farther than your TV or newspaper to witness fools and scorners in action, mocking all that is moral, decent, righteous and godly. You can see it with your eyes, hear it with your ears, and perceive it in your heart as hypocritical leaders, from the top down, heap judgment upon themselves as they proceed to tear apart the Christian foundation of this nation. Such people walk “in the counsel of the ungodly,” stand “in the way of sinners, and sit “in the seat of the scornful” as they reward the enemies of Israel and America (with our tax dollars) and play God over the nations. Nevertheless, God has the last laugh. He says, “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, [Jesus] saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure” *Psalms* 2:1-5.

Where are you today? Are you avoiding the counsel of the ungodly, shunning the company of sinners, and separating from the scornful? Or, are you drawn to worldly counsel, worldly living, and worldly conclusions about God and His truth because it feeds your flesh and serves your purpose? If so, you are heaping judgment and damnation upon your soul. You need to flee such things, and repent. Time is short.

The beautiful thing is God tells us how we can be blessed, and what those blessings are in *Psalms* 1:2-6.

because it must forge something in man’s vain thinking and useless character that is contrary to the dark preferences of his heart, the empty pursuits of the world, and the endless, perverted excuses as to why he prefers death to the choice of life.

The Bible tells us the way of the transgressor is hard (Proverbs 13:15). Granted, the path to life is hard on the ways of death, but this is different than the hard way of the transgressor. The way of life is designed to set a person free to live life, while the way of the transgressor ends in greater bondage, sorrow and bitterness of the soul, and spiritual ruin. The way to life leads to heaven, while the way of the transgressor leads to death, hell, judgment, and the lake of fire. Although the broad way offers pleasure as one heaps the world upon his or her self-life, it is temporary. In fact, the temporary pleasure of this world hides the devastating hardness that will lead to the judgment of spiritual death and ruin. However, the ways of life offer spiritual pleasures for evermore.

The truth is either way will prove hard; therefore, we must choose which way of hardness we will walk. Will we choose the hard, strait way that ends in our salvation, or will we fight any conviction of salvation as we insist on the hard ways of our personal transgression that will lead to death and eternal judgment?

Clearly, a person’s destination is the only say he or she has in regard to the quality of life. It is your choice, and it is my choice. What way have you chose? What way am I now choosing based on my present walk in this dark, dying world? †

RECOMMENDED READING
“Before we Kill and Eat You” - H.B. Garlock with Ruthanne Garlock
“Defeating the Totalitarian Lie” - Hilmar Von Campe
“Eye to Eye” - Facing the Consequences of Dividing Israel” by William Koenig
“True Discipleship” by William MacDonald
“Finding the Reality of God” by Paris W. Reidhead

“But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, [of the righteous] nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

May God help us to walk, stand and sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus! Amen. †



A reminder from GSM—
We are here for such a time as this to carry out the Great Commission of preaching the Gospel, making disciples, contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, equipping the saints for ministry and lifting the fallen. In order

to remain available for this work in these difficult days, we not only covet your prayers, but also ask that you pray concerning how you can help the continuation of this ministry through whatever financial support the Lord lays on your heart. May the Lord bless your faithfulness. “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few.” “The laborer is worthy of his hire.”

QUOTABLE QUOTES
- Thomas Jefferson -

“I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies. If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their currency, first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around the banks will deprive the people of all property until their children wake-up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered.”

“To compel a man to subsidize with his taxes the propagation of ideas which he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical.”

“The democracy will cease to exist when you take away from those who are willing to work and give to those who would not.”

COMMENTS

“Your ministry is such a blessing! May God richly bless you all for your continual service to Him! Thank you for your obedience to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” - ID

“Thank you ladies! Wonderful messages as usual, but really great lately!” - WA

“You girls amaze me. I appreciate your dedication to the Lord. Thank you . . . It [newsletters] is such an encouragement. Rayola, thank you also for the book you wrote. I’m reading it slowly. You have so much in your head to share.” - WA

“Thank you so much for the wonderful newsletter—all articles excellent and right on!! I often wonder about some of these saved people. Probably not much in the line of repentance! Churches are catering to the youth and their wants. Lots of rock music!! . . . We are indeed in the last days.” - B.C.

“Words are inadequate to express how grateful I am for your offer to help me. Wow! I had given up even the thoughts that there was help for me. I have sought ministry and “deliverance” for many years and found that the church is totally unable to help people in this area. Most were more messed up than I was. I am pleased to notice from your articles that you are not mixed up with C. Peter Wagner and his phony NAR apostles and prophets, or with WOF [Word of Faith]. That is hugely important to me! God delivered me from WOF after 35 years in that mess. [It] took several years to get my mind totally free from that. It is truly a “doctrine of demons” and when this life on earth is done, I believe that we will find that WOF took almost as many people to hell as the Roman Catholic Church. It is a wicked ‘force’ that has inserted its DNA into almost every part of the church. It presents a cheap substitute that many will try to fit into their God-shaped receptor sites. It substitutes religion and formulas for relationship with the only one who can save us.” - TX

“Just a note to thank you for your labors, ladies. I refer almost daily to the Hidden Manna teaching and am almost finished with the Discipleship Course. God Bless you!” - ID

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

DEEPER TRUTHS AND NEW REVELATIONS

Q: *A person that is close to me has recently got caught up with R_____ S_____ who supposedly expounds deeper truths. Would you be kind enough to give me any insight you might have on this particular individual?*

A: After checking out this man's Website, it appears as if he is a Manifest Son of God. One of the major earmarks of these individuals is that they claim they have been given some "new revelation" from God that Christians must embrace if they are going to have power or be in the "in group." However, there is no need for such revelation, because God has given us all the revelation we need in His written Word and through His Son (*Hebrews, chapters 1-2*). Granted, we can have a greater unveiling of Jesus by the Spirit as the Apostle John did in Revelation 1, but it will not be a new revelation. A good way to test any revelation is whether it is man-centered or Christ-centered. Heretical revelation puts the burden on man to somehow strive, perform, or work towards obtaining greater spiritual awareness, where Christ-centered revelation is simply gaining a greater spiritual awareness of who Jesus is, desires to be, and can be in our lives through the leading or unveiling of the Holy Spirit. Clearly, this counterfeit has put the burden on people to discover greater spiritual awareness. As you can see, it is a subtle transfer of emphasis from Christ to man.

One of the main reasons people get caught up with these so-called "revelations" is because they do not really know their position or place in Christ. Because of Christ's work on the cross, believers are placed in their different positions, with their different gifts and callings by the Holy Spirit according to the plan of the Father. A good example of this is that we each are personally placed in the Body of Christ for the purpose of edification of the whole Body, as well as having been seated positionally in high places in Christ (*Ephesians 2:6; 1 Corinthians 12:11-19*). We equally share the same place of importance

in the Body in relationship to its working. As believers we do not earn these positions, but we do have a responsibility to understand what it means to have a right standing with God when it comes to our responsibilities in our place in the Church.

As believers, we should not be caught up with obtaining greater positions or enlightenment in God's kingdom. Keep in mind that position points to the type of relationship that must be established, and enlightenment points to the type of light we walk in. Relationship points to our type of standing before God. As Christians, this right standing is maintained when we walk in the light or according to the life of Christ in us. This is why the Apostle Paul's desire was to gain Christ in a greater measure in *Philippians 3*.

We also know a humble servant is considered to be the greatest in the kingdom of God, and if we want more of God, we simply ask Him for more of His Spirit (*Matthew 20:25-28; Luke 11:9-13*). I discovered a long time ago that whenever man is striving for the things of God, the simplicity of Christ has most likely been complicated by man in some perverted way (*2 Corinthians 2-14*).

It sounds as if the person close to you is truly seeking for something; therefore, I would suggest to this person that perhaps what he or she really desires is a greater or more fulfilling relationship with God such as Abraham had. A person once stated that my desire to be deemed a faithful servant by Christ was honorable, but the Lord wanted to call me "friend." Abraham was a friend of God because of his faith, not because of striving or possessing some special enlightenment or position. After all, friendship is based on an intimate relationship. Jesus stated in *John 15:13-15* that He desires to call us friends, for a servant does not have the type of relationship in which Jesus can truly share the matters of His kingdom. †

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit . . ."

—1 Corinthians 2:9b-10—

QUOTES TO PONDER

"Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity. And while humbling and expanding, this subject is eminently consolatory. Oh, there is, in contemplating Christ, a balm for every wound! In musing on the Father, there is a quietus for every grief and in the influence of the Holy Spirit there is a balsam for every sore. Would you lose your sorrows? Would you drown your cares? Then go plunge yourself in the Godhead's deepest sea--be lost in His immensity. And you shall come forth as from a couch of rest, refreshed and invigorated."

--C.H. Spurgeon, from a sermon delivered January 7, 1855 at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark, England

"It wasn't only in Wesley's day. It was also in America, New Haven, Connecticut, Yale. A man by the name of John Wesley Redfield had continuous ministry for three years in and around New Haven. Culminating in the great meetings in the Yale Ball, the first of the Yale Balls back in the 18th century. The policemen were accustomed during those days, if they saw someone lying on the ground, to go up and smell his breath. Because if he had alcohol on his breath they'd lock him up, but if he didn't, he had Redfield's disease. And all you needed to do if anyone had Redfield's disease was just take him into a quiet place and leave him until he came to. Because if they were drunkards, they'd stop drinking, and if they were cruel, they'd stop being cruel, and if they were immoral, they gave up their immorality. If they were thieves, they returned what they had. For as they had seen the holiness of God, and seen the enormity of their sin, the Spirit of God had DRIVEN THEM DOWN INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS because of the weight of their guilt! And somehow in the overspreading of the power of God, sinners repented of their sin and came savingly to Christ."

—Paris Reidhead, Ten Shekels and a Shirt -

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