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"Be Ye Separate"

God has always had a people. He has one today. They are known as Christians. As a group they are the church, and since they follow Christ, then they are the church of Christ.

What kind of people are Christians? Many books have been written to answer this question. Of the many things that we might say at this time, we'll take one major point and attempt to develop it and leave the rest for some other time.

In 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 we have the Apostle Paul writing to the Christians at Corinth. He said, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are

the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty."

The whole thought here is that the Christian is to be separate. This means that he has been called out of the world, that he is to be different from those around him, that he is not to become entangled with the unbeliever. To make it more vivid, Paul refers to a yoke, and that of being unequally yoked together. Since most people in his days were farmers, then all were familiar with the yoke. A yoke was a wooden bar some four to six feet long that united two animals, fitting across their necks, and tied around their necks, while resting against their shoulders to enable them to pull a heavier load. For various reasons, sometimes two animals were unequally yoked together. That is, they were unequally yoked when one animal was larger than the other, such as an ox and a donkey. It meant naturally that it would be more difficult for the smaller animal to pull the load than for the larger animal. The old law opposed this type of thing even among animals. But Paul is using this to illustrate how that it is possible for the Christian and the unbeliever to be so yoked in various relations, and therefore for them to be unequally yoked together. It would mean that the non-Christian would be in position to take advantage of the Christian by making demands of him that he could not comply with, provided he was determined to remain a faithful Christian. Some unequal yokings would exist where the Christian marries an unbeliever, enters a business partnership with a non-Christian, or in numerous other relationships, where undue burdens would be brought on the Christian.

To emphasize the lack of wisdom in entering into such relationships, then Paul asked "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness," "what communion light had with darkness," "what concord Christ had with Belial," "what fellowship could a believer have with an infidel," and "what

agreement the temple of God had with idols?" To ask these questions was to answer them. Naturally, the things that he mentions are as different and opposed to each other as light and darkness, the Christian and the non-Christian, good and bad, and Christ and Satan. In other words, there cannot be any fellowship between those of such opposite extremes. The same would apply to the Christian and the unbeliever.

Paul therefore exhorts those who were involved with the world in various relationships to come out from among them and be separate, that is, where it was possible. At the same time, this would be a definite warning to those who were free of the world but who might be contemplating that of entering into some relationship with the unbeliever, such as in marriage and business; and therefore they should not do so. Of course there are always going to be some who will stubbornly go on and do so anyway in spite of all of the advice against doing so. These are also the ones who end up in being lost to the cause of Christ or else they end up complaining about all of their hardships and then want help in dealing with their problems. But when one will not listen, then he will simply have to face the consequences of his foolish actions.

Paul and Barnabas are good examples of those who not only came out of the world, and with Paul in particular coming out of Judaism and a background of persecuting Christians, but because of their separation from these things, and their dedication to the Lord, then they were chosen for a very special work. In Acts 13:1-3, the record says, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch; and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." These men, along with others who accompanied them, made the first missionary journey and this was the beginning of Christianity being taken to far away places. But the point that I want to make here is the fact that they were chosen in

the first place to do this work because they were totally committed to the Lord and his cause. Had they been entangled in the things of this world then they would not have been selected for this important work.

Christ said to his disciples in his day, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19). The same would apply to the Lord's people of our present day. We have come out of the world, having responded to the Lord's invitation to do so. That means that we have obeyed the Lord, had our sins forgiven, and now we are striving to live separate and apart from all that is bad and wrong in this world. We are still in the world, and still must associate with those of the world up to a point, but we are putting forth an effort to remain free from the world and its entanglements. We are to love those of the world, that is their souls, but we are to hate their sins. We are to abstain from the very appearance of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:22). We are to be known as a peculiar people, a different people. (1 Peter 2:9). We are not to allow the world to influence us for bad, but we are to influence the world for good. We are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (Matthew 5:13,14). Christ said in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

There are many passages of scripture that we could turn to further illustrate the things we are talking about, but Romans 12:9-21 would be a good one to read. Paul says, "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good: Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things,

but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." It would be impossible to improve on the foregoing words of admonition and encouragement.

Finally, let me say again that we as Christians have been called out of the world to live for the Lord. We have not separated ourselves only to become entangled again, or to go back into the old things that we left behind. We are to remain separated from the world, that is, the sins of this world. We are to strive to remain pure, godly, and righteous. We are to be known as Christians because we are Christians, because we truly follow Christ. As such, then we are in position to be used of the Lord, not only in representing him in our daily lives, but in a more specific and definite way in spreading his cause. We can be used of him only as we give ourselves to him.

Are you a Christian as the Bible teaches? If not, then you need to become one? If you have obeyed the Lord, have you remained faithful to him? Can we point to you as one who represents what it means to be a Christian? Remember that the Lord will be with you, bless you, help you, and use you to the extent that you remain loyal and faithful to him.



**associate
editorial**

Individual Discipleship

One of the outstanding things about Christianity is that it is

a religion of individuals. All must be born again individually, of water and of the Spirit, to become Christian. (John 3:5). There is no such word or even idea expressed in the Bible as "born Christian." But all must be born again to become Christian or follower of Christ. Sometimes we forget this individual aspect of Christianity and instead of examining ourselves individually and looking at ourselves individually, we begin to examine others and look all the times upon others. We expect from others certain things but at the same time we ourselves fail to do those very things. We want to show our concern why the church is not growing in number and why the church is not doing this or that and for this we may criticise certain members of the church, most probably the preacher or the leaders. But at the same time we as individuals would not do what we can do. Some members of the church are always finding fault with one thing or another. Instead of encouraging and helping various Christians they always criticise them for one thing or another. The Bible says, Christians ought not to do any thing for strife or vain-glory, but each should esteem others better than himself. (Philippians 2:3). It is in this context, Apostle Paul, in Galatians 6:1-5 wrote, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden."

On a certain occasion when the Lord was talking to his disciples, and he said to Peter, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him said to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto

him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." (John 21:18-22). Here, Peter was getting concerned about John, another disciple, he wanted to know about him. But the Lord said to him, What is that to thee? in other words, that is none of your business, you follow me.

Instead of thinking about John and Jacob and James, I must think about myself. Am I, as a Christian, doing what the Lord expects from me? Do I love the church and its every member, as I love myself and every part of my body? Am I helping in the work of the church? Am I helping the weak to be strong? What is my contribution for the growth of the church? Jesus asked Peter to follow him individually. He said, Follow thou Me. Not because of John or Matthew or Thomas, but because of your own choice. We follow Christ and become Christians of our own choice. One is not a Christian because he or she was born in a home where other family members believed in Christ. A person becomes a Christian when he believes in Christ and repent of sins and is baptized for the remission of his sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Follow thou Me, Is an individual call. Christ gave his plan of salvation to people individually. He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). Notice, the word he, a person, an individual man or woman. At mark 8:34, Jesus said, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Again, he promised individual Christians, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Revelation 2:10). In the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), each servant was judged individually. Each one of them was responsible for his own account. The Apostle Paul said, in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

God sees us as individuals. Every one of us will be judged individually. Each one of us will give his/her own account. We cannot cheat, because others cheat. Instead of looking at others, we should look at ourselves, examine ourselves. We should

follow God's Way which is Jesus, (John 14:6), individually. We cannot follow the crowd and be saved. (Matthew 7:13, 14). Even if majority of people go in a wrong way, I must follow Christ through his New Testament. Remember He said "Follow thou Me."

EXCUSED FROM TEACHING THE LOST... ALSO EXCUSED FROM HEAVEN

Rusty Maynard

Brethren have dulled their ears to Jesus command to take the Gospel into world all too long (Mt. 28:19-20). Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28:18). Yet some brethren seem to believe they have the authority to refuse Christ's command to teach the lost.

Teaching the lost is a responsibility. It is not always easy. Jesus said GO. This may at times seem difficult to us but, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Yes, teaching is a responsibility, yet we can do all things through Christ. If we have the love we so often gladly proclaim for the lost, why do we not want to see every soul with the Gospel? Why is teaching not a privilege to us? Do we as brethren really have this love for the lost, or do we hypocritically say we do?

Jesus made a way for our salvation and we should want to share this good news. We instead make excuses, excuses that may condemn our souls. When Jesus taught the Samaritan woman in John the 4th chapter, certain circumstances might have allowed him to be excused from this job, in our way of thinking. Also notice that he did not make excuses.

(1) Jesus could have been too tired to teach. "Now Jacob's

well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well" (Jn. 4:6). Jesus, since he was tired, could have decided to wait until another time to teach but he did not. He had walked all morning, going from Judea on his way to Galilee. Without a doubt He was tired, yet He taught this woman. How many times have we been too tired to obey God. Often we say let it wait. Wait until I'm rested. This is only an excuse. It will not please God.

(2) "And it was about the sixth hour" (Jn. 4:6). The Jewish day began at 6 o'clock. The time in this story would be around 12 noon. Jesus had been walking all morning, He must have been hungry. We also read, "For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat" (Jn. 4:8). Jesus could have been too hungry to teach. Possibly He could have decided to wait for His disciples to come back, have lunch, and if the woman was still around then teach her. But He did not. How many people today have waited until some future date to obey God for one reason or another and that date never come? How many souls go without the Gospel because brethren want to wait until another time? When excuses are made for not serving God, one is excusing himself from Heaven.

(3) "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink" (Jn. 4:7). Jesus asked for a drink. This is important because there was much prejudice between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Samaritan would certainly not have asked Jesus for the truth. When Jesus asked for a drink, He made the opportunity to teach this woman. He could have kept quiet and excused himself by deciding that if she was not going to ask He was certainly not going to share, therefore there would have been no opportunity to teach. But He did not. The excuse of no opportunity would not satisfy Jesus. It didn't then, it will not now, and it will not on the Judgment day. As long as we wait for the opportunity to teach, it will never come. Because we will not want it to come. We must make the opportunity. When teaching the lost, we must make the first move. The lost are not going to know to ask for the truth. We must make the opportunities.

(4) Jesus could have excused Himself from teaching this woman because of the racial prejudice between the Jews and the Samaritans. "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it, that thou being a Jew asketh a drink of me which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (Jn. 4:9). The Jews considered the Samaritans as dogs. The prejudice was very strong. Jesus could have feared that someone might see him, and excused himself from teaching the woman. But He did not. The disciples did come back and see him and they marvelled that he talked with her (Jn. 4:27). How many souls are denied the Gospel because brethren are afraid that someone might frown upon them for speaking to a certain person. This woman was the lowest as far as the Jews were concerned yet Jesus taught her just the same. We must realize that all men are the same in God's eyes (I Peter 1:17). The excuse of not teaching someone because of their value in our eyes is not in any way pleasing to God. Jesus could have denied this woman the good news because He was too good to associate with her as a Jew, but He did not. Do we today frown on certain people? Do we deny some people the Gospel for that reason? We are wrong if we do. That excuse will not please God.

(5) This Samaritan Woman was very sinful person. "Jesus saith unto her, Go call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast rightly said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly" (Jn. 4:16-18). Jesus could have decided, since this woman had been married five times and was living with a man she wasn't married to, that there was absolutely no need to teach her, for she was beyond help in the darkness of sin. But He did not feel that way. Many brethren today feel they are excused from teaching when one is in such a situation. Jesus again, did not feel that way. He taught the woman and she believed on Him. We realize that all people have the right to hear the Gospel. We have the Gospel and the privilege of taking it to them. A person that is lost is lost whether he is a thief, or a dishonest man, or a murderer,

that person is still without Jesus and must be allowed the opportunity to hear the Gospel. Yet, every soul is worth our time, we are not too good to teach anyone the Gospel, if we are, we are a hypocrite. Even this excuse did not satisfy Jesus and anyone who falls back on it will not be satisfactory on the day of Judgment.

(6) The Samaritan woman had her own religion. "The woman saith unto him, Sir I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (Jn. 4:19-20). The Samaritans had worshipped in their own mountain for generations. Jesus could have decided since she was religious she would not change anyway so there was no need to teach her. But He did not. Jesus taught her in spite of that fact. Today hundreds are denied opportunity to hear the Gospel by some brethren who make the decision for them: "Oh, they wouldn't change any way!" This is not God's way, it is not acceptable to him.

(7) Jesus was, in some future date, going to die a most cruel death. We don't know for sure the exact time he had left upon the earth as a man. Jesus could have decided to go off to Himself with his mother, disciples, and loved ones to spend this precious time together. Jesus probably did not feel like teaching. But Jesus taught the woman. Today, brethren often fall on the excuse of not feeling well. Brethren have headaches, stomachaches, backaches, ingrown toenails, colds, coughs, and so on to keep them from teaching the lost. They might fall on this excuse because they do not want to leave their loved ones, when necessary to take the Gospel to others. This is truly a shame. This excuse did not satisfy the Lord and it will not satisfy us.

Excuses, as we can see, do not please God. We use them only to escape obeying God's commands. Jesus did not make excuse and because He took the time to teach this woman, she believed, many believed, and many more believed on Jesus,

(Jn. 4:39-40). Consider the results and the happiness of not making excuses.

In the 15th chapter of the book of John, Jesus talks about those who bear fruit. What is this fruit that Jesus speaks about? The fruit of an apple tree is apples, the fruit of a pear tree is pears, the fruit of an orange tree is oranges. The fruit of a Christian is other Christians. The only way we can bear fruit and bring forth Christians is to teach others so they can obey. Jesus said those who bear fruit will be helped so they can bring forth more fruit (Jn. 15:2).

However, Jesus also warns those who do not bear fruit: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered: and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned" (Jn. 15:6). Those who do not teach the lost will on the Judgment day find that they had excused themselves from the responsibility of teaching the lost and excused themselves from Heaven to be cast into a devil's hell for all eternity.

Lost Souls!

F. Maurice Ethridge

CHRISTIANS have always had a lot to say about salvation. We have emphasized the need of people to be saved from their sins and the punishment of hell. The "salvation of lost souls" has been the aim of the preacher's work. He has proclaimed often "what one must do to be saved," and we feel that we understand what the salvation of souls is all about.

But there are some other dimensions of the soul's salvation that we need to consider. The word "soul" (psyche) not only refers to that aspect of human nature that transcends the material limits of life but to a person's selfhood—the seat or core of the

individual's mind, will, and emotions. Salvation, then, means more than forgiveness of sin and deliverance from the fire of hell. The abundant life includes also the findings or discovering of one's own true self *heurisko*, (Matthew 16:25).

Our modern scientific-industrial culture has, in a very real way, robbed modern man of his soul, as it has, relieved secularists of the fear of hell. It is to this loss of soul that we address ourselves.

THE CURSE OF MODERNITY

We revel in the blessings given us by science, and none of us really wants a return of the "good old days" of some prescientific era. But the scientific products of modernity are not an unmixed blessing. From those who have given us better transportation, we have also received air and noise pollution. With a cleaner and whiter wash, we also have polluted streams, rivers, and lakes. In mastering our environment, we are also damaging it.

The scientific conception of reality has been of considerable practical value. But it has some very serious limitations. The one that concerns us here is that there is little room for the human soul in such a view. When the basic assumptions of science become the dominant world-view of a society, the souls of men are lost in a new and special way. Lewis Mumford, in *The Myth of the Machine: The Pentagon of Power*, protests:

"The very assumptions about man and nature that one proved so helpful in enlarging the scope of technology were also responsible for minister-pretending, and therewith suppressing, essential organic and human functions, and, what is worse, distorted human purposes by subordinating all other activities to the expansion of power...The masters of the scientific guild, with their many imitators and disciples, now wield more influence and power than any other priesthood. What is more, the religion of this new priesthood, propagated by a succession of attested miracles, has a firm foothold in every mind" (pp. 49-50, 73).

THE MODERN WORLD-VIEW OF SCIENCE

First, science must assume that the universe is knowable and that this knowledge is rational and empirical. Scientific reality, therefore, is logically organized sense experience and it is only one step further to say that this is the only reality. That which cannot be known rationally and empirically is not in this view a scientific reality and therefore is no reality at all. But this assumption cannot apply to all of life.

Secondly, science assumes that the universe is a law-like, ordered system, a true kosmos. Cause-effect relations govern events within the system and if these relations are known, events can be accurately predicted. Explanations are not sought outside the system, but within it. Causes are rooted in the universe itself and are not transcendent to it. Again, the assumption of order and predictability have been very useful, but they cannot accommodate the unique and transcendent qualities of the human soul.

A third assumption is that man can control events and gain a kind of mastery over the universe. If he knows the cause-effect relations of things and can predict events then he can manipulate causes to bring about desired effects. The boundless optimism and the scientific utopias of the 19th century are products of this kind of thinking. Man has it in his power to eliminate the causes of human woe. The catch is that he must control and manipulate people like things in order to do this. He must dehumanize man in order to accomplish these humanitarian goals.

The tragedies of the 20th century have destroyed the native optimism of the 19th, but the basic assumptions of that world-view still have a tenacious hold. Man has not created a utopia, but another kind of hell, the dehumanization of man.

THE HUMILIATION OF MAN

These scientific perspectives have helped man create the materialistic affluent culture that we are a part of. While this culture has given us many more goods and services, it has, at the

same time, taken other things from us. Humanity has lost much by these gains.

In the Scientific World-View : We have lost our sense of importance. We have been made painfully aware of our finitude. Man is no longer the centre of the universe, but only a very insignificant infinitesimal speck in it.

We have lost our sense of uniqueness : we are just like all the other living things of the universe. We are to be understood and treated with dispassionate objectivity, the same way we treat things in the laboratory.

We have lost our sense of wonder and mystery: for this concept holds there is a purely natural, rational explanation for everything. And too, our experiences are so full of the new, the exotic, the bizarre, that nothing excites us any more.

We have lost our moral sensitivity: because the scientist practices "ethical neutrality" in order to protect his objectivity. He is concerned with what is, rather than with what ought to be. Also, moral relativity has dulled our sense of guilt and innocence, of reprobation and approbation.

We have lost control over our destiny: Most of us live and play in large complex social systems that are affected by so many forces that we cannot understand what is happening, much less control it. The sources of power in society are too remote and inaccessible for the individual to affect. "Things are in the saddle riding men."

Finally, with this world-view we have lost our usefulness; machines are much more efficient and economical. We have made a world, Mumford argues, that is fit only for machines. With processes of mechanization and automation, some think we are witnessing the obsolescence of man.

THE RESULT TO MAN IN SOCIETY

Modern organizations operate on the principle of a rational-

istic profit-loss efficiency of production. They are by nature impersonal in their utilitarian use of human beings. While they pull the switch of personality execution they say, "Don't take it personally." This expression accompanies most of the wanton destruction of human souls in modern times—"nothing personal."

The demands of efficient bureaucratic operation reduces every person to an IMB card. We all know the feeling expressed in the poster carried by a bearded youth in a recent protest march: "I am a human being. Do not fold, bend, or mutilate."

Because of its close identification with the values of our culture, the church often has lost its prophetic voice. Sometimes personalities are sacrificed to abstract impersonal doctrines. Souls of individuals become less important than the smooth efficient functioning of the machinery of the institution. Heretics are no longer burned at the stake, they are often frozen out.

If not direct products, these are at least by-products of the spirit of the age. And these have, in turn, produced a pervasive alienation, anomia and malaise in the minds of many modern men, which prods them into a frantic search for the meaning of life. In a variety of ways, man's searching for answers to the question: Who am I? What am I? What am I doing here? Where am I going?

REDISCOVERY OF THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL

Among the several options available to modern man is Biblical Christianity. We here present some of the values of this alternative. There are four exhortations from the Biblical doctrine of the nature of man that seems to be especially pertinent to the lostness of modern souls.

KNOW YOURSELF!

Paul's exhortation: "Examine yourself" (2 Corinthians 13:5), is much like Socrates' "Know yourself." We begin our search for knowledge, as Descartes, by an examination of our own mental faculties.

And when we do, what do we find? "For that which is known about God is evident to them and made plain in their inner consciousness, because God (himself) has shown it to them...they are fully aware of God's righteous decree...They show that the essential requirements of the Law are written in their hearts and are operating there; with which their conscience (sense of right and wrong) bears witness" (Romans 1:19, 32, 2:15 in the Amplified New Testament).

What is special about human beings is that something of God is in them. No other creature feels pangs of guilt about breaking rules. Only human souls have the capacity for moral self-evaluation. The moral faculty involves non-empirical values that transcend the material world, a spark of the divine nature. "God created man in his own image" (Genesis 1:27).

Not only is the human soul a unique entity in the universe, but individual personalities are also unique. According to modern psychology, there are no two personalities that are exactly alike. There is no one else exactly like you in the universe; you are a very special divine creation. By thus knowing yourself, you will be in a better position to find yourself.

RESPECT YOURSELF!

In a big impersonal society that doesn't even know your name, your own self-awareness may be a source of frustration. You develop your own self-image from the way others view you and react to you. You learn to love and respect yourself by being loved and respected by others. Therefore, when society treats you like a thing, it is a great struggle to develop and maintain a healthy self-respect.

This is why racism is such a great sin against the human soul. It treats those of a minority race, not as unique human souls, but only as representatives of a racial classification. Thus the poignant cry of the black man is clearly heard in the titles of works by modern black authors: **The Invisible Man** by Ralph Ellison, **The Outsider** by Richard Wright, and **Nobody Knows My Name** by

James Baldwin. The human soul can be destroyed by a culture that does not recognize it or place any value upon it.

To save your soul you must restore your self-respect. A good place to begin is to realize the value God places on you. Jesus said, "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, you are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7). When God is concerned about such trivial details as the number of hairs on your head you know that he has a great personal interest in you.

When the "King of kings and the Lord of lords takes you into his confidence as his friends and gives his own life for yours (John 15:12-15), then you know you count for something in this world. It is much easier to have a healthy self-respect when you know that you are important to important people.

BE YOURSELF !

It is difficult to be yourself in these times, because our lives are so segmented—we play certain roles at work, others at home, others at church, others with friends, others with a great variety of people in a great variety of situations. In fact, we play so many roles and wear so many masks that we become a little uncertain about our own identity. Hypocrisy, insincerity, many devious modes of "impression management" seems to be built into our modern pattern of social relationships.

The human soul naturally rebels against these kinds of pressures and seeks to "do his own thing." "I've got to be me," stresses that you must run the risk of living consistently with your own self-conceptions.

When viewed from a theological perspective it is foolish to try to be anything but yourself. For, "before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13. See also Psalm 139). You cannot manipulate God's impression of you the way you do.

others', for he "sees right through you." Jesus placed great emphasis on genuineness in his warning, "Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them" (Matthew 6:1).

Paul ran the risk of being himself when he went to Corinth and several people there despised him for it. He claimed, "We have behaved, in the world, and still more toward you, with holiness and godly sincerity" (2 Corinthians 1:12). Earlier he had said, "I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom" (1 Corinthians 2:3-4). A modern preacher would have difficulty being so candid about himself. One finds himself often at the expense of his earthly status.

It is so comfortable to feel that you are in the company of people who know you for what you really are and love you anyway. It is easy to just "be yourself" when you are among such people. You are in the company of God all the time and you can be yourself with him. Being yourself frees you from all kinds of anxieties and stresses, because you don't have to worry about good impressions and bad impressions and whether or not you should try to impress certain people. It is so relaxing to just be yourself.

GIVE YOURSELF !

This is a great paradox: you find yourself by losing yourself. In being foster-parents my wife and I discovered ourselves by giving ourselves. When those children were taken from us, we felt in the most painful way that a large piece of ourselves went with them. Jesus came and gave himself to people in compassionate service. He invested his life in the interests, worries, hurts of others and finally gave his very life for others. In a uniquely personal manner, Jesus gave himself.

He said, "Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 16:25). And Paul pleaded, "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1). Jesus came to enable fallen man to realize the unrealized potentials of his humanity. He did this by fully identifying himself with our natures, so that we may, in

turn, fully identify with his diety. (See Hebrews 2:5-18). That spark of the divine in us, our souls, our unique selfhood, is discovered by a complete surrender of ourselves to Christ and his work—giving self to others.

This is a very ancient method of self-discovery. Modern souls are lost in many ways. This kind of socio-cultural system has never before existed. This Bible method is an old method for the discovery of souls. Today souls are lost in new ways, but this method still works. It is no substitute for responding wholeheartedly to the gospel of Christ, but it can be a part of finding the life abundant.

Smoking

Bobby Key

(Though taken from USA it applies here)

The Secretary of Health said, "Last year smoking was a major factors in 220,000 deaths, from heart disease, 78,000 lung cancer deaths, and 22,000 deaths from other cancers. (Note : this would be higher here as our population is much higher.) Again a famous surgeon wrote, "Non-smokers have one chance in 270 of developing lung cancer, while the person who smokes a large number of cigarettes a day have one chance in ten. Cigarette smoking is cause of lung cancer and bronchitis, and contributes to heart disease."

No informed person will deny that smoking is harmful to the body. "What ? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own ? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." I Cor. 6:19,20. This passage teaches that our bodies are for the Lord, our bodies are members of Christ, that sin must not be committed

against the body, our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, our bodies as well as our spirits belong to God, and that we are not our own.

In view of this, we conclude that a Christian must never harm his physical body. We would strongly advise non-smokers to never begin, and sincerely urge those who do smoke to quit immediately. Don't be like a chain smoker who died and the following inscription was placed over his tombstone: "See, I told you I could quit!" Yes, he quit, but he quit too late. Kind reader, it is not too late for you. We don't believe the Lord has any more pleasure in a person killing himself gradually than he does in one suddenly committing suicide.

It is our conviction that preachers, elders, deacons, and Bible School teachers should set the example in this area. I, personally, don't see how a man could fill any of these roles while continuing to smoke. His influence is obliterated by a cloud of smoke. The Lord will help you to overcome this enslaving habit. Remember, we are obligated to glorify God with our bodies not destroy them.

Murmurers

Dewey Fogerson

Do Everything without Complaining (Philippians 2:14).

Everyone is familiar with the grumbler. In all likelihood you are one. I also have been guilty of murmuring. This confession, however, do not remove the fact that grumbling is a sin and has at times, provoked the wrath of God.

There are grumblers in all groups, and when attempts are made to do something worthwhile the number of those who murmur increases. Such people are not those who openly express

their discontent in order to improve things or prevent mistakes. On the contrary, they mouth their displeasure in secret among their associates. Their sullen mutterings are spoken to friends, family and even casual acquaintances.

The murmurers are not constructive. Instead, unwilling to lend themselves to a task they spread the venom of discord and doubt among others disrupting any good that might be done.

Let us be warned that murmuring is not just a bad habit or an inconsequential defect in our attitude; it is destructive, sinful and dangerous to the person who practices it. Israel murmured in the wilderness and thought they grumbled only against Moses. That was not the case, however, for only did Moses warn them that they grumbled against Jehovah, but God Himself said, "I have heard the murmuring of the children of Israel..." (Exodus 16:12).

It was because of their secret murmurings that Israel wandered 40 years in the wilderness (Numbers 14:29). Many died by fiery serpents because they spoke against God (Numbers 21:7). Grumblers and malcontents dangerously subject themselves to the wrath of God (Jude 16) unless they repent.

The Lord did not promise an easy road to heaven. Instead he demands commitment, cooperation and diligence all of which can be very trying to an individual. The temptation is to murmur about the leaders; about the directions they lead out in; about the effectiveness (or lack of it) in reaching others with the gospel; about problems real or imagined. Such is not constructive criticism. It only destroys the spirit of unity and the joint effort of Christ's body to do His Will.

Beware of murmuring.

Know The Truth

Marvin Rainy

DO YOU BELONG TO THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT ?

Did Jesus Christ build a church? Did he identify his church? Can one be a member of the Lord's church? What does the Bible say about the church that Jesus built?

The church that Jesus built is the church of prophecy. Isaiah prophesied that the "Lord's house" would be built in the "last days" (Isa. 2:2,3), and Paul identified the Lord's house as the church of the living God. (I Tim. 3:14, 15). Daniel said God would set up a "kingdom which shall never be destroyed," in the days of the Roman kings (Dan. 2:44, 45). And Christ speaks of the church and kingdom as the same institution. (Mt. 16:18, 19). The angel told Mary that God would give her son Jesus throne of David "and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Lk. 1:30-33). Christ is now reigning over his kingdom (Acts 2:36; I Cor. 15:24) and is head of his church. (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18).

The church that Jesus built is the church of promise. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven!" (Matt. 16:18, 19).

The church that Jesus built began on the first Pentecost after his resurrection. Jesus told his disciples (and others) "That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." (Mark 9:1). Shortly before his ascension he told them the power would come with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost. (Acts 1:1-4). The kingdom came with power on this day; the church had its beginning. People became members of the church by believing (Acts 2:37; Heb. 11:6), by repenting (Acts 2:38) and by being baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38, 41).

Why don't you become a member of the church that Jesus built?

A Divided House

Mac Layton

IS UNITY POSSIBLE ?

Is religious unity possible? Can we be one? Is there a divine plan upon which all believers can unite? Legion are the answers coming from the preferences and opinions of today. In answer to this divided house what do the Scriptures say? It will be our purpose here to present a brief Biblical survey of religious unity.

A DIVIDED HOUSE

"And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand." (Mark 3:24-25). Not Abraham Lincoln, but the Saviour and Leader of Christianity first spoke these words. And Christ prayed, "that they (all disciples) may all be ONE; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be ONE in us; that the world may believe that thou didst send me." (John 17:21). Disunity among believers is one of the major reasons for infidelity and the progress of terror on our globe today. While on earth Jesus promised that his flock would become "one flock, one shepherd." (John 10:16). And it is the inspired Paul who later declared that Christ died that he might make men ONE, so making peace. (Eph. 2:15).

THE TRAGEDY OF DISUNITY

Unity among believers is both good and pleasant. (Psa. 133:1). But one of the seven abominations hated of Jehovah is discord among brethren. (Prov. 6:19). Likewise division and parties are both classified as works of the flesh barring those that practice them from the eternal kingdom. (Gal. 5:19-21). Just look today at the broken and divided homes because of religious disunity, the

distrust, wrangling, and the waste that follows on the divided house of Christendom today.

The Christian ideal of oneness of belief, organization, worship, and work, is held up for our imitation and obedience everywhere in the New Testament. For instance, the young church at Jerusalem was said to be "of one heart and one soul." (Acts 4:32). A fervent plea was sent forth by Paul to the church at Corinth to be one, "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (I Cor. 1:10). And he asked a question that needs to be asked, again in this age where nothing seems sacred, "Is Christ Divided?" (I Cor. 1:13). Christ is not divided, and unity can never be obtained while men uphold and justify division. It was by working together that the first Christians carried the hope of salvation to the world. It was by working together that the names of this nation's battles have been the names of her victories. It is by working together that a home can be made a heaven on earth. Unity is not only desirable but demanded in business, government, and the home. Where there is a divided house there is weakness, confusion, and failure.

GOD'S PLATFORM FOR UNITY

Is there a way that all men can be one in Christ? By inspiration Paul gives the Divine Plan for Unity: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in the one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." (Eph. 4:4-5). Since two cannot walk together except they be agreed (Amos 3:3), the platform of Unity presented here forms the basis of agreement among brethren. Notice the seven parts of the Divine Plan for Unity:

THE DIVINE PLATFORM FOR UNITY

1. One God as the object of worship and service.
2. One Lord as the voice of authority in worship and service.

3. One faith as the complete expression of authority.
4. One body as the complete church for work and worship.
5. One baptism as the door into the one body.
6. One Spirit as the source of life.
7. One hope as the divine motive.

If the purpose of all men would be to return to New Testament Christianity and the simple yet perfect plan of God, a united brotherhood is possible. It is our plea that there is a divine solution to the problems confronting a divided Christendom. The Bible is God's perfect pattern by which to build the church and life. A proper view of its authority, absolute standard of truth, and proper sections, will restore the unity for which Christ prayed and died. It is not what the Bible teaches that divides the world into religious groups. It is what men have added that the Bible does not teach that divides the world.

We should desire that ultimately the church for which Jesus died supercede all the movements of men, and that His people may be ONE in every sense of the word. May His church shine in all its beauty and pristine glory.

Can We Know Truth ?

By John Stacy

Sad to say today but it is the fact that millions of people are indifferent to a knowledge of religious truth! They couldn't care less! On the other hand there are those who tell us that we cannot be certain that we possess a correct knowledge of the truth. This must be denied!

Atheism, evolution, and philosophy have stood behind this lie of the Devil which says that truth cannot be obtained. Justification for the theory that we cannot see the Bible alike rests on the idea that we cannot know that what we know is

truth. The New Morality movement is based on this false assumption. Is truth attainable?

Note these scriptures. Proverbs 23:23, "Buy the truth and sell it not." WE CAN HAVE THE TRUTH IF WE ARE WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE! That price is diligent, life-long Bible study and prayer! Jesus said in John 8:31-32, "If ye abide in my word, then truly are ye my disciples, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." IF WE ABIDE IN THE WORDS OF CHRIST WE CAN KNOW THE TRUTH! In I Timothy 3:15 we read, "...that men may know how to behave themselves in the house of God which is the church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth." The church is to support and uphold truth. If we cannot know truth and if we cannot know that what we know is correct the church cannot do that which it was designed to know. In I Peter 1:22, we read, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obedience to the truth..." Our souls are saved only by obeying truth. If we cannot know truth or know that what we know is correct, we cannot know if we are saved! Relative to the Christian life, Paul in Ephesians 6:14 said, "stand therefore having girded your loins with truth..." Why? Because truth is part of the Christian's armor used against the Devil. If we cannot know it we don't have this part of our defense!

Finally, in John 4:23,24, "For the hour is come and now is when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers, for God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." We cannot even worship God correctly if we cannot know truth and if we cannot know that what we know is correct! Friends, we can know truth. We can understand God's will for us today if we are willing to understand.

Working Faith

Ronnie Lowe

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that

cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Though faith is essential to a person's salvation, faith alone is not enough. A person is not saved by faith only...without obedience. *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"* (James 2:24). This is the only verse where the phrase "faith only" appears, and it affirms that "faith only" is not enough.

If a person could be saved by "faith only," then he would be saved without obeying. But Jesus is the author of eternal salvation only unto those who obey him (Hebrews 5:8-9). *"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also"* (James 2:26). True faith, therefore, demands certain actions in response. True, active, obedient faith involves the following:

HEAR...This is Faith Coming.

(see Romans 10:17).

BELIEVE...This is Faith Beginning

(see John 12:42-43; Mark 16:16).

REPENT...This is Faith Deciding

(see Acts 26:20).

CONFESS...This is Faith Speaking

(see Romans 10:10; Acts 8:37).

BE BAPTIZED...This is Faith Surrendering

(see Acts 2:37-38; Galatians 3:26-27).

When a person's faith is genuine, he will do what God says, in the way God says, and for the purpose which God intends, regardless of the sacrifice involved:

YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE !

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