

*In
Search
of*

Truth and Right

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Philippians 4:8 (NASB-U)

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Christ**

Proverbs for the Church

By: Steven Harper

There is no better book for direct application to the believer's life than the book of Proverbs. It is a book that teaches us about life. There are proverbs contrasting the foolish and the wise, the rich and the poor, the righteous and the wicked, and many more contrasts — along with some very simple but profound sayings. Those proverbs are still just as applicable today as they were when first written, and there are a few I would like us to consider in today's article that have particular application to the church and its members.

"He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer" (Proverbs 18:9). In the Lord's church, there is simply no room for laziness, but how much more work would be accomplished if we could simply get all members involved in the work we strive to do! Often, it is a struggle just to get all the members to show up for worship and even more of a struggle to get them to come to Bible classes set up for their own spiritual growth and edification; sadly, it is nearly impossible to get some to take part in the work that must be done.

And it is not that these same people are remiss in their secular jobs; many, in fact are hard workers who give a lot of their time for their secular jobs and the things of a material, rather than spiritual, nature. It is not that these members are all-around lazy — just lazy in regard to spiritual matters and the

(continued on next page)

In memory of Hazel Carroll

She passed away Friday, February 29, 2008. Visitation will be 2-6 PM Monday, March 3rd at Reasner's Funeral Home. The funeral will be at 6 PM, Monday, directly following visitation. Please keep her family in your prayers as they grieve.

TIMES OF SERVICES	
SUNDAY	
Bible Classes*	10:00 AM
AM Worship	10:45 AM
PM Worship	6:30 PM
WEDNESDAY	
Bible Classes*	7:00 PM
(* Bible Classes for All Ages)	

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work of the local church. It amazes me sometimes how we can find time for so many unimportant things and find **no** time for the eternal.

The proverb previously cited is certainly applicable in such cases! One who can never find time to participate in or even support the work done in the local church will soon be part of a church that is falling apart, breaking down, and soon destroyed. Lazy members will destroy a church just as certainly as a false teacher and troublemaker in the church. Oh, it may take a little longer than if someone came in and just wreaked havoc on the church, but it will just as surely be destroyed.

The cure for laziness is, of course, diligence. But diligence will only come when we realize the importance of the work we should be doing as the Lord's church in this particular location; it will come only when we realize we all should be doing our part (cf. Ephesians 4:16); and it will only come when we realize that we will one day have to give an account for the deeds done in the body (2 Corinthians 5:10). Will you be one who contributes to this church's strength and growth, or a reason it is destroyed?

"The beginning of strife is like releasing water; therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts" (Proverbs 17:14). A more expeditious means of destroying a church than laziness is to allow strife to begin, or if it has begun, to allow it to continue. Laziness may destroy a church over a period of years or even decades, but strife can destroy a church in a matter of mere weeks or months. Once even the smallest of disputes is begun and, if left alone, is allowed to grow and be a source of divisiveness and contention, either the contentious ones end up leaving, the dispute is settled, or the church is destroyed.

The wise writer urges us to stop contention before it starts because it is the **best** time to stop a quarrel. According to his illustration, once a quarrel is begun, stopping it is like trying to catch water and put it back after the floodgates have been opened. Too often, though, small differences are allowed to grow into serious disputes and then contentions and then outright divisiveness and it is not long before the whole church is affected. Lines will be drawn and sides will be chosen, and fleshly passions will be aroused to the point some members will act in the most ungodly manner towards those they are supposed to love like brothers.

Effective elders and caring members will see these problems long before they become quarrels and they will seek to resolve them before the quarrel starts, knowing the destructive consequences if left alone. Churches without elders, with **ineffective** elders, or with apathetic members will simply allow these things to fester until there is an all-out uncivil war between the members and the church is destroyed. Listen well to the words of the inspired wise writer when he tells us, *"It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel"* (Proverbs 20:3). Strife is a church-killer.

"Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins" (Proverbs 10:12). In direct contrast to the hatefulness that causes contentions is the love that brethren should have for one another and which brings peace. Even in situations such as those where there are differences and disputes, it need not turn into quarrels — if both sides have the proper love for one another. Hatred will be the source of increased contentions and animosity, but love seeks the good of others and a peaceful resolution — even if one side or the other [or each] has to make sacrifices.

Note that the wise writer is not saying love 'covers up' the sin [as in pretending it didn't happen or making sure no one else finds out about it], but he speaks of the willingness to forgive and not hold grudges when a wrong is suffered. Love gives the other the benefit of the doubt and believes it was an honest error and seeks reconciliation. It is **not** the now-common practice of forgiving when the sinner is unrepentant, but having a willingness to forgive that they might continue their brotherly relationship. In the local church, those who are unwilling to forgive or forget will cause the church to stagnate because they will refuse to move on unless they feel like they have had their 'justice' [which is

Today's Sermon:

Forgiveness

2 Corinthians 2:1-11

really revenge]. The one who loves his brother will forgive as God forgave him (**Ephesians 4:32**) and remembers he could be in need of forgiveness some day. Churches who have members who willingly and sincerely love one another will not be perfect — but they **will** work together in harmony and will be ready to forgive when necessary that the work may continue and souls may be saved.

“Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed” (Proverbs 27:5). Especially in the local church, love must be manifested and demonstrated consistently for it to be an effective part of the church's operation. When members — and especially the leaders — hold back from exercising discipline or rebuke for fear of ‘offending’ or for fear of appearing ‘unloving,’ the church will soon be in serious spiritual trouble! As the wise writer says, it is **better** to openly rebuke one who needs it than to secretly ‘love’ them by doing nothing. Too many brethren have fallen for the worldly way of thinking that says love means never correcting someone in error, when we should be **proving** and **demonstrating** our love for them **by** rebuking them when they need rebuking.

When the church withholds discipline and/or rebuke for fear of appearing ‘unloving,’ we will soon have a church full of sinners and ungodly people who indulge in whatever fleshly desires they wish because they know no one will say anything. Many churches across this country are already there for that very reason! The word ‘sin’ is not even used anymore except maybe when they speak about why Christ died, and it is never applied to anyone who happens to be in the audience; it's as if Jesus died for **someone's** sins, but not mine!

Rebuke is never a easy thing to do, but it is **absolutely necessary** in the Lord's church if we want it to be the church Christ meant it to be (Ephesians 5:27). Rebuke should be a regular part of the teaching and preaching that is done in the church (**2nd Tim. 4:2**), and it must be done by using the inspired word of God (**2nd Tim. 3:16**).

A diligent, caring, loving, and disciplined church will do much good and will lead many to salvation.

News N Notes

Remember these in your prayers:

- Darla Elsen's brother is in the hospital, Darla has traveled to Arkansas to be with her family
- Lucille Harless, Dave Harless' mother
- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband.
- Blake Swanson, Dorothy Lancaster's grandson
- Virginia Malick, Peggy Miller's mother
- Trudell Tennant
- Bud and Merl Frey
- Tammy Garrison, Zeda Goddard's daughter
- Audrio Gaudio, Nancy Morris' great-granddaughter
- Marie Roberts, & Ed's father, Jim Roberts.
- Ila Marshall, Harold Marshall's mother
- Cary & Grace Lancaster

Nursing Home:

- Pauline Sellers
- Ethel Mahan

Shut-ins:

- Josephine Clow
- Mabel Fleming
- Pauline Midcap