

*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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Carriers

*By: Steven Harper
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In the medical world, a "carrier" is an individual who transmits diseases or germs to others without necessarily showing signs of the same disease or effects of the germ being carried; in most cases, the carrier is immune to the disease being carried but is a danger to others because he is spreading it to wherever he goes.

In the brotherhood of believers, we have **carriers** who are just as dangerous to those around them but we often ignore the destruction that follows them. These **carriers**, though, do show signs of 'infection' but we act as if what they carry around and spread to others is not contagious or a matter of concern so we often do nothing about it. That should change, and I hope the following words will give us justifiable reasons why.

Carriers of Doubt. There is absolutely nothing wrong with someone genuinely asking questions about the faith or even the Bible—if it is for the purpose of weighing the evidence and making a decision. But there are some among the brotherhood of believers [some now with their own web sites for all the world to see] who feel it is their place and their duty in life to question everything about the faith, everything about the Bible, and everything about God. Their motives are often unknown and certainly varied, but these are not genuine seekers of truth; they are merely troublemakers who want an audience and are usually bothered when someone else is actually convicted of truth.

The apostle Paul warned Timothy against some who, through the spread of "*irreverent babble*" and the propagation of false teachings, had overthrown the faith of some (2 Timothy 2:16-18). When doubt spreads, an overthrown faith is exactly the result we should expect. Legitimate, truth-seeking questions are the means by which we gain a knowledge of truth and what please God, but illegitimate, doubt-

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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)**

causing questions are the means of destroying the faith of others and should be stopped quickly. It would be in our own best interest to identify and differentiate between legitimate questioners and those who ask questions merely to plant the seed of doubt.

The true seeker will ask questions and accept the Scripture's answer; the doubter [skeptic] will ask questions but, when answered, will only change the subject or ask more questions about the same subject. The true seeker will spend time in the word of God with the goal of finding out what God has said; the doubter will spend time in the word of God for the sole purpose of finding supposed contradictions and 'gray areas' that leave only more doubt. The true seeker will grow in the faith; the doubter will only grow weaker.

The cure for doubt is an honest heart that regularly searches God's word for answers and which willingly accepts God's answers. We are told that what is written is sufficient to cause belief (John 20:30,31), but a hardened heart will not be touched by truth or be caused to believe when it does not **want** to believe. Let us examine self regularly and let us be honest with the word of God that all doubt be eliminated.

Carriers of Apathy. As we saw in an article a few months back entitled *Proverbs for the Church*, the lazy man in the church contributes to the destruction of the church just as sure as the one who sets his mind on destroying it (cf. Proverbs 18:9). Hand-in-hand with laziness, though, is something we know as plain old **apathy**—the attitude of 'I don't care.' The apathetic disciple [an oxymoron, if there ever was one] does nothing because he simply doesn't care enough about anything to put forth the effort!

The apathetic one doesn't care that God wants him to gather with fellow believers to be edified and encouraged and built up in the faith (cf. Hebrew 10:24-25) so he thinks nothing of staying at home whenever he feels like it. He doesn't care that it is his personal responsibility to teach the lost (cf. 2 Timothy 2:24-26) so he expects others to pick up the slack and do what he simply doesn't care enough to do. He doesn't care that he is weak in the faith so he never studies the Bible on his own and simply waits for someone to tell him what he believes and points to the preacher or the elders when someone asks him a question. He doesn't care enough that God is Creator and worthy of his worship, so he thinks nothing of offering up lip service [if anything at all] or simply nothing at all, he rarely prays on his own, and the songs he sings when he manages to go to worship with others is merely an emotionless recitation of words he has memorized without taking the time to understanding the meaning or exhortation they provide.

Unfortunately, if left unchecked or uncorrected, this apathy will spread to others. If he finds it in his heart to worship with his brethren, others note the lack of real involvement in the worship and they, too, begin to lose interest. Younger members of the church and children who are brought by their believing parents see him and wonder, 'Why try if **he** isn't?' This disease of apathy spreads quickly and quietly, and must be stopped as soon as possible!

The cure for apathy is, of course, love for God and love for our fellow man. Love for God will move us to seek His will and to do it; love for our fellow man will move us to do whatever we must for them—even to the point of leading them to the truth, sharing our material goods, and possibly even giving our very lives. The solution for apathy is to examine our hearts regularly to see if we are still moved by the gospel message and God's love. If that doesn't motivate us to **care**, then we are in a precarious position!

Today's Preachers:

AM: Ed Roberts

PM: Dave Harless

Carriers of Negativity. The negative one is full of bitterness and is simply not happy unless he is unhappy [if you can understand *that* logic]. His disease is often brought about by envy or jealousy, so he looks around at his fellow believers who may have more material goods, who are stronger in the faith than he, or who seem to be enjoying life, and instead of rejoicing with those who rejoice (Romans 12:15), he despises them for *their* joy and *their* success only because it is not *his*. When he walks into a crowd of happy, celebrating brothers and sisters, the mood soon turns sour and the crowd disperses because he has become the 'Debbie Downer' whose job it is to speak disparagingly of those whom he should love, find fault with those whom he should be praising for their faithfulness, and complain when there are multiple reasons to rejoice and be thankful.

The wise writer was absolutely correct when he said, "*Envy is rottenness to the bones*" (Proverbs 14:30). The negativity it brings will eat away at his own heart, but it also spreads like cancer when he is around others, weakening the faith and the feelings of love that once thrived between fellow believers and destroying what unity once existed. It saps the energy of the whole body and it is not long before others dread being around the infected one for fear of being infected with negativity themselves or, at the very least, having to hear his continuous complaining or fault-finding.

I am no fan of *The Power of Positive Thinking* [the book], but I also recognize that there are plenty of **positives** about being a child of God and it is high time we quit allowing 'Mr. Negativity' to continue to exist among us! If left uncorrected, his negativity will keep a church from doing the work that *could* be done, will keep brethren from loving one another as they should, and it will drive away any and all who may visit the assembly where he is a part.

The cure for negativity is, of course, to "*Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth*" (Colossians 3:2). Negativity comes from a fleshly mind; a spiritual mind will dwell on the blessings of God and rejoice.

News N Notes

Remember these in your prayers:

- Phyllis Coen
- Mary Jane Myers recovering from surgery
- Phyllis Coen recovering from pneumonia
- Sue Prager, Ken Prager's mother, recovering from surgery
- Terry Smith
- Earl Miller
- Trudell Tennant
- Lucille Harless, Dave Harless' mother
- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband.
- Virginia Malick, Peggy Miller's mother
- Blake Swanson, Dorothy Lancaster's grandson
- 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