

*In
Search
of ...*

Truth & 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.” Phil. 4:8 (NASB-U)

A publication of the
**Wellsburg
church of Christ**
Which meets at:
**112 Sunset Ave.
Wellsburg, WV 26070
304-737-1422**

We appreciate so much your presence here with us today. We would like to extend an invitation to join us at any of our other times of worship.

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)

Today's Sermon:

Doing The Right Thing

*Audio CD's are available
free of charge in the foyer.*

*Please visit our website:
www.truthandright.org*

*If you have any questions regarding
what we teach and practice,
please feel free to ask*

The Lord Will Make An Exception

By: Shawn A. Smith

When the serpent told Eve, “*You will not surely die,*” (Genesis 3:4) it introduced a thought to Eve. God had told her one thing and now she was being told something else. Lies, deception, and telling “half-truths” originated with Satan. Jesus said so (John 8:44). Once she believed the lie, the fruit became much more tempting.

Could it be that part of the deception of Satan is believing that God will make an exception in our case? While we know what God said (or forbid as in the case of Adam and Eve) and certainly would bind His law upon all others, we operate by way of a double standard! “*Well, God certainly would not punish me for this.*” Did not the deceit of the devil remove from Eve’s mind the fear of being punished?

I certainly do not believe that the temptations of this world are not very enticing. After all, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life compose the arsenal of Satan’s devices (1 John 2:15-17) and he used them upon both Eve and our Lord (Matthew 4:1-11). I also know that God’s word will not pro-

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duce any fruit when the person's heart is filled instead with, *"the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things"* (Mark 4:19). However, a true fear of God and being punished by Him has been replaced. An exchange has taken place. Paul explained it like this, *"they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved", "believed a lie," "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"* (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

We want so much to do that which is wrong that we actually don't believe God will punish us. Part of having a love for the truth is loving ALL the truth, including that which we don't like. We certainly like the part of truth that talks about being saved and we will desperately cling to that portion of God's revelation and say, "Amen" to it. But if we hear a sermon on hell, eternal punishment and who's going there, we suddenly develop a hearing problem or a short attention span! Why is that?

Could it be that we have been deceived into thinking that God will make an exception in our case?

The trends in our society are towards a rejection of hell or that hell applies to others. On October 24, 2003, Guardian Newspapers reported on a survey conducted by the Barna Research Group in Oxnard, California which polled 100 people on their views of the afterlife, *"While 71% of Americans believe in hell, only half of one per cent think that they are likely to end up there."* "Heaven, fortunately, would appear to be much more crowded. With 76% of Americans believing in heaven, 30% see it as 'an actual place of rest and reward' and 46% see it as an 'eternal place of existence in God's presence'. Of those asked, 64% believe that they are on the way to heaven after death." Other polls on the subject reveal similar results.

Could it be that among baptized believers, a certain percentage who persist in sinful lifestyles or exhibit ungodly behavior also share these same views? Consider the following

scenarios and see if many brethren are deceived into thinking that God will make an exception in their case.

Modern Day Diotrophes

We know about the man whom the apostle John warned, *"I wrote to the church, but Diotrophes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church"* (3 John 9,10).

Here was a man who had pleasure in unrighteous living, all the while thinking he was a Christian. He may have had good leadership qualities, a dynamic personality, and think he had the best interests of the congregation at heart. He may have even stood for the truth on vital and current issues of his day.

"While 71% of Americans believe in hell, only half of one per cent think that they are likely to end up there."

But in truth when he did not receive John, he rejected his authority as an apostle of Christ. He also would have been the type of man who rejected the teachings of the other apostles such as Paul and Peter concerning the necessity, work, and qualifications of elders in a congregation. How many churches over the years have been stifled in growth because they allowed such a man to dominate them? Is not a man like this deceived into thinking that God will make an exception in his case?

Institutional Practices & Supporters of the Social Gospel

You don't hear much debating going on anymore between gospel preachers on the issue of whether it is right for a church to support out of its treasury institutions such as orphan homes, missionary societies, preaching schools, or colleges and universities. We've got plenty of churches with "of Christ" attached to them around here that are finan-

cially associated with International Bible College and Mars Hill and other types of local co-operation that I'd like to see apostolic approval for. Many of these same churches keep building bigger fellowship halls, multi-purpose buildings, and recreational complexes all under the auspices of Christ's will. Will I hear only the excuse, "Well, I'd rather do something than do nothing at all?" Such thinking is based on the deception that the Lord will make an exception in their case. After all (as I'm occasionally reminded by my critics in the area), *"they're growing!"*

Undisciplined Brethren

Brothers and sisters in Christ who willfully forsake the assemblies of the saints week after week I fear also suffer from this same delusion. Some argue: *"You can't show me the scripture that tells me I have to be there for Bible class, Sunday evening assembly, or Wednesday night."* No, and I shouldn't have to! Brethren who persist in this rebellion are no different than Diotrefes. They reject the authority of God when it comes to the whole concept of a local church and its work. How can a church be edified and how can elders feed the flock they oversee if the sheep don't associate with the rest of the flock (Ephesians 4:11-16)? This is indeed a case of *"walking disorderly"* (2 Thessalonians 3:6). And brethren who try to make up for their continual absence by doing "good works" for their family or others demonstrate their belief that the Lord understands and will excuse them. On the other side, a local church that indefinitely pampers, coddles, or ignores such unruly members is in effect saying, *"The Lord will make an exception in our case"*. He doesn't really mean what He says. A little leaven won't hurt anyone (1 Corinthians 5:6,7; Hebrews 13:17). Yes, elders must certainly exercise self-control and, *"support the weak, be patient toward all men,"* but they must not neglect to, *"warn the unruly"* either (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

Delaying Obedience

While this part of the article deals with un-

believers and those who know the truth but keep putting off submitting to Christ, perhaps these thoughts might help us knowing better how to deal with those we are trying to convert. Because those in the general population as well as seasoned Christians can harbor the attitude this article is dealing with, it stands to reason that the folks who stand at a spiritual cross-road in their lives may also be postponing obeying the gospel because they believe they are the exception to the rule. The Bible clearly teaches that, *"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23) and that God will punish those who die in their sins (Romans 6:23). Consistent with this knowledge is the understanding that, *"God is no respecter of persons but in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him"* (Acts 10:34,35). This is why the apostles were commanded to preach the gospel, *"to every creature,"* and, *"all nations"* (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19). *"He that believes not shall be condemned"* is proof that the devil's deception to Eve and to the Lord and to you and to me and to those who keep putting off obedience is nothing but a lie. God will not make an exception in their case!

Included in the group of people who delay obedience would be those brethren who persist in sin, be it an unscriptural marriage, adultery, fornication, theft, covetousness, and the like and are thus, *"living in them"* (Colossians 3:7). Paul in this context warns the brethren, *"because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience"* (verse 6). Some brethren may be duped by Satan into believing the lie that the Lord will make an exception in their case. They may even get so perverted in their thinking that they actually believe their service to God and to the local church is so valuable that God will, *"overlook"* or blink His eyes at them.

No, let us remember: There are no exceptions. We must regret what we've done (Matthew 21:28,29), then repent, *"towards God"* (Acts 20:21). God has indeed *"commanded all men everywhere to repent"* (Acts 17:30), because He is, *"not willing that any should perish"* (2 Peter 3:9)

Those Serving This Week

Sunday AM

Class Prayer	Tim Henderson
Announcements	Dave Harless
Song Leader	Harold Marshall
Scripture	Ezekiel 34:16-31
Reader	DC Coen
Prayer	Ed Roberts
Speaker	Tim Henderson
Lord's Supper	
Bread	Chuck Isinghood
Fruit of the Vine	Don Coen, Sr.
Serve	Terry Smith
Serve	Nathan Marshall
Closing Prayer	Earl Miller

Please inform the one in charge of announcements if you are unable to fulfill your responsibilities.

Sunday PM

Announcements	Dave Harless
Song Leader	Nathan Marshall
Scripture	Ezekiel 35
Reader	Blake Headen
1st Prayer	Chuck Isinghood
Speaker	Tim Henderson
Communion	Don Coen, Jr.
Closing Prayer	Ken Prager

Wednesday

Announcements	Dave Harless
Class Prayer	Earl Miller
Song Leader	Tim Henderson
Invitation	Chuck Isinghood
Closing Prayer	Nathan Marshall

News N Notes

Please continue to remember these in your prayers:

Recovering:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| - Ann Rudolph | - Mary Jane Myers |
| - Marie Roberts | - Phyllis Coen |

Traveling:

- Alfred and Mary Jane Myers

Prayer Requests:

- Ila Marshall, Harold Marshall's mother, has been moved to a rehab facility.
- Cary and Grace Lancaster
- Albert Miller, Earl Miller and Marie Robert's brother, as he recovers from heart surgery.
- Alfred Myers diagnosed with a leaky valve in his heart
- Mary Jane Myer's daughter-in-law has cancer in her neck .
- Zeda Goddard's sons, Dallas and Terry
- Frank Miller, Dorothy Lancaster's brother
- Rick Miller, Dorothy Lancaster's nephew
- Jimmy Roberts, Ed & Marie's son
- Lucille Harless, Dave Harless' mother
- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband, as he continues to deal with cancer treatments.
- Virginia Malick, Peggy Miller's mother
- Blake Swanson, Dorothy Lancaster's grandson
- Bud and Merl Frey
- Tammy Garrison, Zeda Goddard's daughter
- Jim Roberts, Ed Roberts' father

Don't forget our Shut-ins

Nursing Home:

- Ethel Mahan
- Pauline Sellers

At Home:

- Josephine Clow
- Mabel Fleming
- Pauline Midcap

Send them a card—give them a call—let them know we are thinking about them.

If someone needs to be added to this list, please call 304-914-2262