

In search of...

Truth & Right

Volume 11 Issue 4

January 24, 2016

Taking It Personally

It has probably happened to all of us at one point or another. You're out in public and someone suddenly sees and then seeks to avoid you like the plague, simply because you're a faithful member of the Lord's church. It might be some formerly faithful, but now fallen away, out of service member who has foolishly and fatally chosen to go back to the things of the world (1 John 2:15-17; 2 Peter 2:20-22). On the other hand, it could be some devoted denominationalist who knows from former conversations that they can neither find biblical, "book, chapter and verse" validations for their religious convictions, or, knock you off of yours (2 Timothy 3:14-4:4). Or, it could simply be someone who refuses to even want to acknowledge God's

existence – although they certainly ought to know better (Romans 1:18-32). To any and/or all three of these tragically God-forsaking groups, you, as a faithful follower of Jesus Christ and member in good standing of His one, New Testament church, are a constant, visual, hated and much-loathed reminder of their sinful choices and unsustainable self-justifications, just by your physical presence. You don't have to say or do anything. No matter how nicely you seek to try to treat or to greet them, it doesn't matter. They will go in circles around the supermarket; studiously stare at an item they don't even want; perhaps pretend to be engaged in perpetual and important conversations on their cell phones; or simply stick their noses up in the air,

contemptuously turn their backs, and disdainfully stroll away in a different direction; all in an effort to avoid coming face to face with you. No cause for alarm or surprise; Jesus said that for those who would faithfully follow Him, it would be exactly that way (John 15:18-25).

And whatever you do, don't take it personally. In fact, if you truly know the scriptures, then you obviously know enough not to. But while you can't take it personally, you must take it prayerfully – for them that is. Jesus taught that we must pray for our enemies (Matthew 5:43-45). The apostle Paul later echoed similar sentiments to our first century brethren in the Lord's church in Rome (Romans 12:17-21). We must pray for them just as our Lord and Savior prayed for those responsible for leading Him to the cross to be crucified. Because just like His persecutors, ours too – no matter which of those three aforementioned groups they may fall into – “know not what they do” (Luke 23:34) either! If they did, then the vast majority of them certainly wouldn't dare do it.

You see, when people turn their backs and contemptuously walk away from or avoid us, simply

because we're faithfully following God and His word and they're not... they're not truly rejecting us, but **God Himself**. Just as He had to remind Samuel, so too, God reminds us today: ***“They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.”***

The New Testament too, repeatedly reinforces this same exact point. Read and re-read the great Judgment Day depiction of Matthew 25:31-47. And as you do, please notice in that text, that the dividing line of distinction between those who will go away into everlasting destruction and those who will enjoy the utopia of everlasting life with Jesus, comes down to just one thing: whatever they did or did not do, to one of the least of Jesus' brethren! That's it! Because just as Jesus Christ Himself assures in that very passage, whatever anyone does or does not do to even the least of one of His brethren (which we are – Hebrews 2:10-18), He takes it as if they did it personally and directly to Him!

We see this same truth portrayed loud and clear by our Lord and Savior yet again, when He said to Saul of Tarsus on the

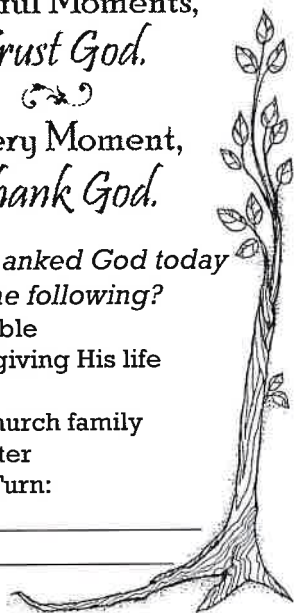
road to Damascus as Saul was in the process of persecuting members of Jesus' one, New Testament church: "**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?**" **And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting..."** (Acts 9:4-5). In that passage as well, Jesus reinforces the fact, and makes it absolutely, abundantly, and unmistakably crystal clear, that those who avoid, dislike, persecute, disavow, reject and rebel against, and disdainfully and contemptuously turn their backs and walk away from God's people or Christ's church, do so absolutely and directly to none other than Jesus Christ Himself as far as God and His word are concerned! And to continue to do so, is to do so to ones' own, self-induced destruction (2 Chronicles 29:6-9)! Do you now see why we need to pray for, and reach out to such people? Surely when they do such things to us, they know not what they do – **to Him!** But one day they will...

Doug Dingley

Happy Moments,
Praise God.
Difficult Moments,
Seek God.
Quiet Moments,
Worship God.
Painful Moments,
Trust God.
Every Moment,
Thank God.

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- Laughter
- Your Turn:



This bulletin is published by the
WELLSBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST

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BIBLE Trivia!

DIRECTIONS: After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

1. What king is remembered as placing a "heavy yoke" of taxation on Israel?

- a) Jeroboam
- b) Rehoboam
- c) Ahab
- d) Solomon

2. At what church did the Egyptian-born Apollos first serve?

- a) Laodicea
- b) Ephesus
- c) Sardis
- d) Philippi

3. Who wore an ephod with gold chains on it?

- a) Aaron
- b) Ithamar
- c) Joshua
- d) Gideon

4. In what gospel does Jesus say that the Scripture cannot be broken?

- a) Luke
- b) Matthew
- c) John
- d) Mark

5. Whose last words were, "What is there done, my son?"

- a) Eli
- b) David
- c) Jacob
- d) Eleazar

6. According to Jesus, what insect devours the treasures we store up on earth?

- a) The locust
- b) The moth
- c) The scorpion
- d) The fly

7. Which prophet said, "All we like sheep have gone astray"?

- a) Nehemiah
- b) Micah
- c) Isaiah
- d) Jeremiah

8. Where did Jesus stay when John the Baptist was in prison?

- a) Capernaum
- b) Bethany
- c) Nazareth
- d) Jerusalem

9. Where did the men of Judah gather to anoint David as their king?

- a) Beersheba
- b) Bethlehem
- c) Ramah
- d) Hebron

10. Who quoted the prophet Joel in an early Christian sermon?

- a) Matthew
- b) Stephen
- c) Peter
- d) Phillip

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS & VERSES:

- 1) A, Reference: 2 Kings 3:26-27
- 2) C, Reference: John 8:44
- 3) B, Reference: Ezra 7:24
- 4) D, Reference: John 18-19
- 5) B, Reference: Acts 15:22, 32

- 6) C, Reference: Genesis 16:11
- 7) A, Reference: 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- 8) D, Reference: 2 Samuel 20:22
- 9) C, Reference: Luke 2:24
- 10) B, Reference: Ezekiel 27:15