

Volume 14 Issue 1

January 6, 2018

COLORBLIND

Some people say that, compared to women, all men are at least a little colorblind. I don't know whether that's true, but I can say from my own experience that I struggle sometimes to distinguish my black socks from my navy blue ones. Often, especially in the hazy light of early morning, I can only tell the two apart by holding them against something I know for certain is black — a pair of trousers, for example.

I also own a necktie whose color has baffled me from the day I received it. When I hold the tie out in front of me, I am certain it is some mysterious shade of light

brown — an odd beige or tan, perhaps. Certain, that is, until I hold it against a shirt or sportcoat of determinate hue, at which point I can see that it's really a peculiar shade of gray. (I accidentally wore this tie once with a tan jacket and brown slacks. My wife thought I had taken leave of my senses — my fashion sense, anyway.)

We often make the mistake of judging our spiritual “color” by looking at ourselves in isolation — essentially, comparing ourselves to our own standard of righteousness. The problem with doing that is we almost always meet our own standard. The Bible tells of a time

when such thinking was the norm: *"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes"* (Judges 17:6; 21:25). Does that mean everyone in Israel in those days was approved of God? Certainly not. But they weren't looking to God's law as their measurement. Everyone did what seemed right to him — whether it was truly right or not.

That's the trouble with a self-composed standard: it always looks right. *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death"* (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). Or, as Solomon put it in another proverb, *"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise"* (Proverbs 12:15). We can easily be self-deceived when we follow our own path without first making sure it is in line with the Lord's: *"For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself"* (Galatians 6:3).

We can make the same mistake in looking at other people, too. We sometimes say of our neighbors, *"They're not Christians, but they're good moral people."* What we're doing is comparing them with ourselves — if they look okay next to us, they must be okay before God.

That's a fearfully dangerous perspective: *"For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise"* (2 Corinthians 10:12). Someone may be "good" in our subjective assessment, but our standard is not the defining measure — God's word is. As Paul says, we dare not get into the habit of comparing anything against ourselves, any more than a carpenter measures his boards against pieces he has already cut, rather than by

the ruler.

The only safe way to distinguish our spiritual "color" is to hold ourselves up against the Scriptures and compare (James 1:23-25). Similarly, the only safe way to tell others whether they are heaven-bound is to open the Bible with them, and invite them to make that same comparison. We don't want to be guilty of sending anyone before God's judgment wearing the wrong color garment.

- Michael D. Rankins

Where "U" Are Needed

"U" are needed in Bible
St_dy,
not in ignorance.

"U" are needed in S_pport,
not in neglect.

"U" are needed in _nity,
not in party spirit.

"U" are needed in D_ty,
not in irresponsibility.

"U" are needed in B_ilding
_p,
not in tearing down.

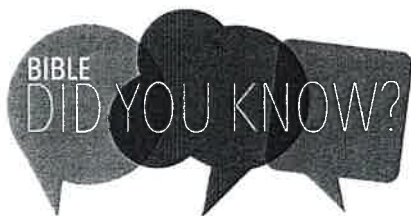
"U" are needed in the Ch_rch,
not in the world.

The Church needs "U", but
more than that YOU need the

Church. (Author Unknown)

Turtle on a Post

"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3). Alex Haley, the author of "Roots" and other books, had a picture in his office which showed a turtle sitting atop a fence post. The picture was there to remind him: "If you see a turtle on a fence post, you know he had some help." Mr. Haley said, "Anytime I start thinking, 'Isn't this marvelous what I've done!,' I look at that picture and remember how the turtle - me - got up on that post." 1Peter 5:5 says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."



***"In all labor there is profit,
but mere talk leads only to
poverty."***

Proverbs 14:23



MONTHLY CHALLENGE

DIRECTIONS: Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

1) Come and See Challenge

John 1:39 *"He said to them, 'Come, and you will see.' So they came and saw where He was staying."* I like Jesus style when it came to convincing the curious religious seekers of His day that He was the One they should follow. "Come, and you will see." A welcome invitation was always extended with the confidence that should they accept the invite they would be sufficiently convinced of His credentials and persuaded to follow Him. We can employ the same approach as well to those around us who have yet to make up their mind as to which direction they should go spiritually. "Come, and you will see." Perhaps all some around us need is to come see for themselves what faith in Christ is all about. Let's set a goal to invite at least 1 person each week this month to come and see.

2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

Galatians 6:1-10

"Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. For each one will bear his own load. The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."