



"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." Hab. 2:1

October 21, 2011

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Feature Article - Why Reproofs Are So Important - Part 5

We are considering at present the Myths About Reproving –

Myth #1- Reproving others is unspiritual, unloving and unkind,

Myth #2 - It is wrong to reprove anyone outside your local church,

Myth #3 - Words of reproof must never be spoken to or about "God's Anointed Ones.,

Myth #4 - Reproof always involves judging and judging is sin.)

Myth #5 is "It is always wrong to reprove anyone in public. It must always be done in private."

About thirty five years ago I taught in a Bible college full time. The little church we attended had a bus ministry so I signed up to serve as a bus captain. The bus driver and I knocked doors every Saturday to find more people to ride our bus. One Saturday night we were at a birthday party, and our pastor was there as well. I mentioned to him that several new kids had promised to ride with us the next day. To my surprise he loudly rebuked me in front of a house full of people for some of the kids misbehaving on the bus the previous Sunday. Since I had not ridden on the bus on the way home that Sunday (because of preaching at another church) I was unaware of their misconduct. It didn't take long to figure out who were the culprits, and it was soon resolved and they apologised to the pastor. He never indicated to me afterward that they had apologised. Would it have been best if he had come to me in private and exhorted me to be more vigilant?

There ARE issues that arise between brethren which can be dealt with privately. **Matthew 18:15** addresses this situation, "*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*" Note that the offence is between two individuals, not between groups of people, it is not a public matter. One brother has trespassed against another. So the offended brother is required to go to his offender and reprove him in person. There is no need to take out a full page ad in the local paper and hang out all the dirty linen he can dredge up.

So that solves the problem, doesn't it? We should never reprove anyone in public. Is that right?

No, it is not.

1 Timothy 5:20 reads, "*Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.*"

We must take note of three truths in the text. First, there are occasions, or offenses, or issues that need to be reprovved, rebuked, and confronted publicly. Second, not only is a corrective (should we say, punitive?) action to be taken, but there is also a preventive action in the verse ("That others also may fear.") Open rebuke issues a warning to those who hear the sinner publicly reprovved. Third, the command to rebuke them that sin and to do it publicly is found in the context of dealing wisely with pastors. Now, before all of you pastors faint dead away, or send me a threatening letter, take time to read the context.

1 Timothy 5:17-20 "*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.*"

The balance of the text is perfect. Honour the good pastors, Feed them and reward them. Be careful how you handle accusations against them. And then, if they HAVE sinned, don't cover it up. Bring it out in the open and rebuke it publicly! Other pastors will hear and fear. That is the simple sense of the text.

Still not convinced? I didn't think you would be. Your problem is you've been to too many Pastors Schools, and have heard too many of your heroes pontificate about how wrong it is for a pastor to be reprovved at any time, by anybody, anywhere, even if the need arises.

(Did I just hear someone say, "AMEN!" ?) I realise fully that many "fundamental" Baptist pastors will never be persuaded by Scripture, but if there ARE still any who can be persuaded, then you may wish to consider the following biblical examples of public reproof:

- 1) In Genesis 3 God reproved Adam, Eve, and the serpent publicly. 100% of the sentient beings on earth heard the reproofs.
- 2) Chronologically, Enoch is next. We read his sermon in Jude 14, 15. It involved public reproof, like all good preaching does. (Preached those verses lately?)
- 3) In Genesis 12 Pharaoh rebuked Abraham, and in chapter 20, Abimelech did likewise.
- 4) In Genesis 31 Jacob and Laban reproved each other in front of their family and in front of Laban's servants.
- 5) Or consider the prophets' reproofs of Israel. Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, Amos, and Malachi, and the list goes on. John the Baptist openly rebuked the Jews and Herod. Our Lord openly rebuked Peter in Matthew 16 for thinking like a lost man. Paul publicly rebuked Elymas in Acts 13 for perverting the right ways of the Lord. Paul even withstands Peter before the church in Antioch and before their guests from Jerusalem. The Lord of the seven churches of Asia reproves almost every church and does it in print so that every reader of Revelation can see it and be warned. Is that public or what?

I cannot help wondering if the reader hears what I hear when I meditate upon these things? I hear the Lord whispering to my soul that He will not only reprove me in private, but will do so in public as the need arises. I ask myself questions, like "How can preachers and churches put their entire ministries out in public view, and expect only praise in return? Do they not understand that good men, godly men will rejoice when they tell the truth, but must reprove them when they tell a lie? Do they suppose that they will receive only the sweet and not the bitter?" And I ask myself the question, "Do they not know that good preaching includes presenting truth publicly so that it cuts the hearers and reproves them for their sins?" And last, I ask the question, "Could it be that pride and self esteem have so taken possession of our pastors that we no longer love God's reproofs? Are we so enamoured of our exalted positions and the adoring masses that we can no longer handle the reproofs that humble us and make us better preachers? Could this be the underlying reason for pastors worldwide jettisoning the biblical doctrine of repentance? Do they love themselves so much that they will forsake the plain teaching of God's Word in order to prop up their egos?"

I remember when a pastor could go to a fellowship meeting and hear real preaching, the kind that stepped on his toes and barked his shins. Not the kind that buttered him up (and fattened him up for the slaughter?) Maybe that's one secret to the widespread obesity among preachers.

Show me a preacher that welcomes reproof, including public reproof, and then loves his reprover for his reproofs, and I will show you a man with a future.

So, was my pastor right to reprove me publicly for my bus kids playing up? After years of chewing on it, I am inclined to think he was. The offence was committed in public. I WAS responsible for their conduct and should have enlisted someone to do my job when I was

away. Sure, it hurt to be told off in front of everybody. And he didn't exactly do it with a right spirit. But it didn't hurt for long. And I learned some important lessons out of it.

And the boys apologised to our pastor. And my conscience was clear.

Oh, yes, one of the boys became our son in law. I always wonder if he would have asked for our daughter's hand in marriage if I had not been reproved for my failings and then reproved him for his? Hmmm, makes you think, doesn't it? Reproofs are more important than we know.

Bro. Buddy Smith

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Poems That Preach -

I Once Met A Man . . .

*I once met a man on his way,
on a bright and sunny day.
He was arrayed in a suit and a tie,
and shiny shoes that caught my eye.
I felt inclined to say,
Where are you going so finely arrayed,
on such a hot and humid day?"
He replied, I have not worked for many a day
and really need a full day's pay.
I have an appointment to meet a man,
who will give me a job if he can.
I want to put my best foot forward,
because I feel it is well in order, to let him know
I will not loiter, but will do my best to give a full
day's work for a full day's pay, and the way I dress
just may carry the day!*

*I met a man in a shopping centre
and the weather inside was far from winter.
He had on a coat and a matching tie,
that would catch the most discerning eye.
I felt inclined to say,
Where are you off to so smartly dressed,
do you always wear your Sunday best?"
Oh no, he replied, But we have a house we wish to buy,
and the price to pay is very high,
so upon a banker we must rely.
Today I will meet him eye to eye,*

*and I want him to know that I will try,
to repay him without a sigh.
And if I dress my very best,
then I should pass the reliability test."*

*I once met an older teen
and he was dressed so very keen.
His hair was so neatly trimmed
that some might think, What's wrong with him?
I felt inclined to ask, as he hurried past,
Where are you going so very fast?
You are dressed to the nines, and it just midday,
Are you going to a party to dance and play?
"Oh no," he said, I'm sad to say,
I'm going to a funeral on this awful day.
My very best mate, has passed away.
I want to show all those who attend,
that he really was my very best friend.
I dress like this to show I care,
and to lose a friend is hard to bear.*

*I once met a man sloppily dressed.
He was not wearing his Sunday best.
He was on his way to God's own house.
I wondered why,
as he passed by,
his dress did not honor the Lord most High?*

Pastor John White

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Baptist Distinctives -

What Are the Eight Baptist Distinctives?

These teachings may be remembered by associating them with the letters that form the word "BAPTISTS."

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY: The Bible is the final authority in all matters of belief and practice because the Bible is inspired by God and bears the absolute authority of God Himself. Whatever the Bible affirms, Baptists accept as true. No human opinion or decree of any church group can override the Bible. Even creeds and confessions of faith, which attempt to articulate the theology of Scripture, do not carry Scripture's inherent authority. 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:20,21

AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH: The local church is an independent body accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church. All human authority for governing the local church resides within the local church itself. Thus the church is autonomous, or self-governing. No religious hierarchy outside the local church may dictate a church's beliefs or practices. Autonomy does not mean isolation. A Baptist church may fellowship with other churches around mutual interests and in associational tie, but a Baptist church cannot be a "member" of any other body. Colossians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5,19,23

PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER: "Priest" is defined as "one authorized to perform the sacred rites of a religion, especially as a mediatory agent between humans and God." Every believer today is a priest of God and may enter into His presence in prayer directly through our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ. No other mediator is needed between God and people. As priests, we can study God's Word, pray for others, and offer spiritual worship to God. We all have equal access to God -- whether we are a preacher or not. 1 Peter 2:5,9; Revelation 5:9,10

TWO ORDINANCES: The local church should practice two ordinances: (1) baptism of believers by immersion in water, identifying the individual with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, (2) the Lord's Supper, or communion commemorating His death for our sins. Matthew 28:19,20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

INDIVIDUAL SOUL LIBERTY: Every individual whether a believer or an unbeliever, has the liberty to choose what he believes is right in the religious realm. No one should be forced to assent to any belief against his will. Baptists have always opposed religious persecution. However, this liberty does not exempt one from responsibility to the Word of God or from accountability to God Himself. Romans 14:5,12; 2 Corinthians 4:2; Titus 1:9

SAVED, BAPTIZED CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: Local Church membership is restricted to individuals who give a believable testimony of personal faith in Christ and have publicly identified themselves with Him in believer's baptism. When the members of a local church are believers, a oneness in Christ exists, and the members can endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:12; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 4:3

TWO OFFICES IN THE CHURCH: The Bible mandates only two offices in the church - pastor and deacon. The three terms - "pastor," "elder," and "bishop" or "overseer" - all refer to the same office. The two offices of pastor and deacon exist within the local church, not as hierarchy outside or over the local church.

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE: God established both the church and the civil government, and He gave each its own distinct sphere of operation. The government's purposes are outlined in Romans 13:1-7 and the church's purposes in Matthew 28:19 and 20. Neither should control the other, nor should there be an alliance between the two. Christians in a free society can properly influence government toward righteousness, which is not the same as a denomination or group of churches controlling the government. Matthew 22:15-22; Acts 15:17-29

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Blinded Minds -

(One of our dear Aussie brethren, Alan Pope, told me years ago that there isn't much difference between the gods of the heathen in the Old Testament and the gods of modern man. He said they used to spell the name of their god "B-A-A-L", but now they spell it "B-A-L-L". Just one letter difference. Football, basketball, cricketball, soccerball, baseball, no doubt about it, the gods of the modern age all have the word "ball" in them, no matter what the prefix is. My sweetheart and I grew up only about 30 miles from Robert Lee, Texas, so this article titled "Football Is God" rang a bell with us. - Ed)

FOOTBALL IS GOD A report in the Los Angeles Times on the drought in Texas observes that "football is God" ("In West Texas," Los Angeles Times, Oct 3, 2011).

The report is on the drying up of the football field at Robert Lee High School in west Texas. "So people here are doing everything they can think of to save it. After all, this isn't just about a game. Here in West Texas, football is God, and the field is church."

That is a sad but true statement, and it is just as true for professing Christians as for out-and-out pagans. Sports is one of America's gods.

Dr. Alan Goldberg of the University of Connecticut said: "Sports [is] like a religion, and the god of that religion that we all worship is the god of winning" (CNSNews.com, August 31, 2001).

An extensive survey commissioned in 1983 found that seven in every 10 Americans watch, read, or talk about sports every day. The study, the most comprehensive ever undertaken of America's attachment to sports, found that almost 35 million people are "ardent sports fans" who watch sports events on television at least once a week, and in some cases, every day. I am confident the statistic would be higher today.

In 1982, the famous sports announcer Howard Cosell, while viewing the largest Sunday football game attendance in Texas history, said "the Cowboys are more than a football team in Dallas; they are a religion."

Professional football and basketball have become a religion all across America. In other lands the religion is called soccer. A person's god is that which he loves and serves, and God hates idolatry. The prophets and apostles preached against idolatry, and so should we. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols ("1 John 5:21). (Friday Church News Notes, October 14, 2011, www.wayoflife.org)

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What About Chrislam ? -

By B. Michael Bigg

Chrislam is a syncretistic or blended religion which merges elements of Christianity and Islam. There are two different forms of Chrislam:

One started in the 1980s in Nigeria by Tela Tella, and is called Ifeoluwa,

The other in 1999 by a Muslim, Prophet (Dr.) Samson Saka, who after he went on a Hajj to Mecca, says, "The Lord told me, Make peace between Christian and Muslim."

Chrislam's ideologies are being formally developed, in the United States, by the Islamic-Christian National Dialogue Committee, the proponents of which include Rick Warren and Robert Schuller. But despite what some may see as such high profile endorsement, is Chrislam a valid thing, let alone a good thing?

Are Christianity and Islam compatible?

The Focus on Similarities

Those endorsing Chrislam, and its leaders and teachers, wish to highlight the similarities between Christianity and Islam, such as:

1. Abraham as "our" Father,
2. Regard for biblical prophets: Moses, David, etc.
3. Similarity of stories in the Bible and the Qur'an: e.g. the Flood.
4. Jesus born of the virgin Mary
5. The names/attributes of God

Though it is legitimate to note these similarities between Islam and Christianity are the similarities themselves legitimate?

YES in some cases they are, but not in all:

Abraham did have more than one son. He had Ishmael (Gen 16), Isaac (Gen 21), and others to Keturah (cf. Gen 25:1). Nevertheless, the promise of redemption was through the freeborn Isaac and not Ishmael. Indeed the entire story and history of God's plan of redemption was through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob/Israel and through the line of Judah. Isaac's son Esau, who was also Jacob's brother, aligned himself through marriage with Ishmael. The descendants of Ishmael and Esau were (and to this day are) enemies of Israel.

Islam's regard for biblical prophets is based on Muhammad's and the Qur'an's assertion that they are Muslims. Islam claims that because these prophets were truly men of God, they came back to God, i.e. reverted to being Muslims (since according to their teaching Adam was a Muslim); and this (reverting) is what everyone does when they believe the Qur'an's teachings.

Though there are matching historical events, places and people in the Qur'an, the timeline in the Qur'an places events in the wrong order, compared to the Bible. A prophet of the

God of the Bible would not get this wrong (or, for that matter, a person who knew the Bible, and not just heard stories on one's travels, would likewise not get this wrong).

Believing Jesus is born of the Virgin Mary does not make two theologies compatible.

There are similarities in names, attributes and titles given to many ancient gods many of which match those given to the God of the Bible. Simply because Allah has 99 names, many of which correlate to names/attributes given to God in the Bible, doesn't make Allah the god of the Bible any more than Rome's Cupid (the god of love), Clementia (goddess of mercy); or the Sumerian "god of heaven" Anu.

But What about the Differences?

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life - John 3:16.

The "so" in "For God so loved the world" in the Greek text of John 3:16 is the word *hutos*. This is not a word meaning quantity, as if this verse is talking about the amount or degree of God's love; this word means "in this way", "in this manner". This is the crunch! This is the non-negotiable element of Christian doctrine which makes Chrislam a misnomer and contradiction. There can be no such entity as Chrislam because at the heart of their theology Christianity and Islam are opposites.

Bible/Christianity:

- God has a Son
- Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit
- Jesus died on the Cross
- Jesus died on our behalf
- Man is inherently evil and even his righteous deeds are as dirty rags
- Salvation is by Grace alone through Faith in Jesus Christ

Qur'an/Islam:

- God has no son
- Christian Trinity: Father, Mary, Jesus
- It only appeared that Jesus died on the Cross
- Someone else (Judas or Simon of Cyrene) took Jesus' place on the cross
- Man can do good deeds to become acceptable to god
- Salvation is earned your good deeds must outweigh your bad deeds

Conclusion:

There are elements within Islam and the Qur'an which can be used as points to instigate conversation or dialogue, but it is not what Christianity and Islam have in common that unites us, as our differences are fundamental differences. Chrislam exists because some people hold to the premise that both the Bible and the Qur'an can be regarded as (equally) inspired and authoritative. In order to do this, though, they are required to be selective in what they read, and apply a Christianised understanding to the text, rather than the Islamic they must deliberately ignore the fundamental teachings of Islam.

To say to a Muslim, "We have the same god" in order to initiate dialog allows that Muslim to equally say, "Then why won't you listen to what his Prophet Muhammad has said and written?" Our similarities don't unite us, because our differences keep us apart.

When in Samaria (John 4) Jesus was asked, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship (verse 20)."

Jesus replied, "Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews" (verse 22).

Jesus did not placate the Samaritan woman with things the Samaritans had in common with Judaism. Though supposedly knowing and (according to their traditions) correctly worshipping the same God as Israel, Jesus pointed out that they were wrong.

Likewise Paul at Athens (Acts 17) did not evangelise by preaching what God had in common with the Roman gods on the contrary he preached the Unknown God to them the God that they did not know, did not understand. The same too for Muslims, we need to tell them of the God they do not know, not the god they think they do know.

In Revelation's introductory letters Jesus stands before the churches (lamp stands meant to be a light to the world, witnesses for him) aware of their condition. To the churches we are told, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" and in these letters the church is told to be faithful, remain faithful, remain true, do not compromise.

Some churches in these letters tried, like now, to syncretise Christianity they were rebuked.

As witnesses for Christ and of Christ, let us not compromise the Gospel (i.e. betray Christ) by talking about similarities. Preach Christ and Him Crucified.

"but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and to the Gentiles foolishness," - 1 Corinthians 1:23.

"For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." - 1 Corinthians 2:2.

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" - Galatians 3:1.

Quote of the Day: "Before we "shake your hand" in responding to your letter, we ask forgiveness of the All-Merciful One and of the Muslim community around the world." – Rick Warren in a speech to Muslims.

(For further info, go to: <http://worldwidechristians.6forum.info/t2213-about-chrislam> and <http://www.nowtheendbegins.com/blog/?p=1366>)

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Deacon True Sez -

"One of the biggest problems I see in churches is folks getting their noses out of joint. Somewhere along the line, they never learned that just because they are offended, it doesn't mean they are right!"

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Posters With Punch –

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Notable Quotes and Quotable Notes -

- If at first you don't succeed, do it the way your wife told you the first time!" (contributed by my sweetheart! - Ed.)
- "To have God on our side doesn't mean sailing on a boat with no storms, it means having a boat that no storm can sink!"
- Regarding "temptation" Puritan Richard Sibbes said, "Satan gives Adam and Eve the fruit, and takes away Paradise. Therefore, in all temptations let us consider not what he (Satan) offers, but what we shall lose"
- I'm not dumb. I just have a command of thoroughly useless information. *Bill Watterson*

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Therapy for the Funny Bone -

Fire Trucks and the Carbon Tax - Fire trucks are red for a reason, you know. Fire trucks have four wheels and eight men. Four plus eight equals 12. There are twelve inches in a ruler. Queen Elizabeth is a ruler. Queen Elisabeth is also a ship. Ships sail the seas and the seas have fish and fish have fins. The Finns fought the Russians and the Russians are called "Reds." And that's why fire trucks are red. And if you think that that reasoning is confusing you ought to hear our politicians explaining how the new carbon tax is going to be good for us!!!!!! - Ed.

Paddy and Mick's uncle Seamus died and left a request in his will that he be buried at sea. So Paddy and Mick put his body in their little rowboat and proceeded to row out to sea. After half an hour Paddy said to Mick, "Do you think we are far enough out yet?" Mick said,

"I'll go over the side and see," only to find that the water only came up to his waist. So they rowed out for another half an hour. Paddy asked again, "Are we far enough out yet?" Mick went over the side and the water was up to his chest. "Not yet," he replied. When they had rowed for another half hour, Mick waved his hand for Paddy to stop rowing and jumped overboard and disappeared. After a bit he surfaced, sputtering and coughing, and stuck his head up over the side of the boat and said, "Now we're far enough out. Pass me the shovel."

Aussie farm boys are always playing pranks. Three of them from Wagga Wagga piled in their little ute (pickup) with their billygoats in the back and drove off to Sydney to the big agricultural show. They all won prizes and were pretty excited, so on the way home, they stopped in Canberra at Parliament house to play a prank on the politicians. First, they bought a little tin of red paint and painted the numbers 1,2, and 4 on the sides of the billyboats. Then one of them distracted the security guard while the other two slipped the goats in a side door and turned them loose. Well, these billy goats were a lively lot and soon they were chewing on pieces of legislation, and butting legislators, and climbing up on the Speaker's bench. It took a couple of hours for the security staff to corral the three billy goats, and we hear that the Labour Party and the Greens are still looking for goat number 3.

Questions I'd like answered -

- If a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?
- Why do croutons come in airtight packages? Aren't they just stale bread to begin with?
- Why isn't the number 11 pronounced onety-one?
- If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed?
- Do Lipton Tea employees take coffee breaks?
- What hair color do they put on the driver's licenses of bald men?
- At income tax time, did you ever notice when you put the two words "The" and "IRS" together it spells THEIRS!

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Sermon Fodder –

Time For God To Work

"It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." Psalm 119:126, 127,128

We are living in a climate of lawlessness. We see the denigration of the law in the media every day. Quite often the laws are flouted by those in authority, who bend or change the laws to suit their own desires and goals. They justify themselves by adding loopholes to laws that look completely straightforward. The phrase, "Laws are made to be broken," seems to be the motto for the age we live in. Every rule is relatively flexible, never set in concrete, always open to interpretation and the light cast by the circumstances.

This is also the silent theme in many churches. God's Word is forever settled in Heaven. It is the final authority in anyone's life, and yet...who really holds to that? We manoeuvre our way around just about anything that doesn't take our fancy.

We have made void God's law. How have we done it? - by deciding that human reasoning is the way to get ourselves out of trouble!

When we go to the Word, perhaps seeking wisdom, or maybe unwillingly browsing, and find something that would convict us to repent, and humble ourselves before God and others, our old nature shies away from that kind of ego popping, pride destroying experience. It really does end up being all about our pride, and whether we will submit to God and His Word, or whether we will try and reason our way around it. Are we all so full of pride that God cannot speak plainly to us? Seeing humility in us is one of God's great desires. He cannot speak to us, He cannot use us fully, if we refuse to be humbled before God, and also before man. Our society dictates that we look out for ourselves, that we love ourselves, that we pander to our most lovely, and our most revolting desires. We are taught to take pride in whatever and whoever we are. If we are the most debased sinner, we will find something in ourselves to be proud of. If we think we are not the most debased sinner, it's probably our pride speaking too. We have lost sight of God's perspective on ourselves, and in that moment, we have begun to smudge God's laws here and there, wherever they disagree with our ideas of how we want to live our lives.

When this happens, there is a flow-on effect, not only in the sphere of relationships and influences around us, but also there is a stone set rolling in Heaven. When men make void God's law, then it becomes time for God to work.

David infers that he has seen this happen before - God stepping in, God working because of the lawlessness of man. I think most of us can look into our own lives, and find multiple times when we ignored and flouted God's holy laws, and we know exactly what happens when God has to step in. David knew where this was going also...therefore....he made a few wise choices.

When men, saved or unsaved, make God's law void, when they twist it, when they justify themselves, when they ignore or gloss over God's Word on any given doctrine or principle, then David says it is time for every truly God fearing person to separate themselves. God is about to work, therefore I love thy commandments above gold; therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right.

A wise man, in times like these (when issues are iffy, and philosophical reasoning is 'where it is') will draw as close to God as he possibly can. He will feel an overwhelming desire for God's Word, it will be more precious to him than all his texts and commentaries, more than all the book reviews and quasi-intellectual articles in all the religious magazines he subscribes to. It will be more to him than all the opinions of man, and all the specious arguments used to make wrong seem right. It will be more valuable to him than the purest gold. Nothing will be more prized, nothing will be more desired in his life than abiding in the living Word of God.

A wise man will suddenly see God's Word as having the only true definition of everything we enquire about. He will esteem **all** of God's precepts concerning **all** things **to be right!** What if this shines some light into some dark areas of his life? Praise God, he will get it right. God's Word concerning all things is right! What if, as we read our Bibles, we start thinking to ourselves...all God's precepts concerning all things are right? Will that change our lives? I think so! Will that also have a flow-on effect? Oh yes! This is the flow-on we want, one where lives are influenced and turned into the path of right, totally convinced of the absolute perfection of God's Word. An effect that instills in us the faith to take His Word as it is, not to twist or change it, no need to accommodate compromise in the interests of fellowship - I just have to hold fast in obedience to the Word. It is completely right!

How would our lives change if we just took it as gospel that all of God's Word was just as it should be? That there was no need to look for technical and imaginary loopholes so that we can share some soft soap with people who are having their feathers ruffled by the Holy Spirit of God. God is full of love and mercy, and so should we be, forgiving and forbearing but we are also to speak the truth in love. Don't lie by omission when we speak to others about God's Word, don't settle for a comfortable compromise. We want to be near to God, and somehow compromise doesn't exist around Him! Be loving to others, and pray for them, encourage others to take God's Word for the holy and living thing that it is... always right in everything!

When we are living out God's laws, we will begin to gain something of God's perspective about sin. I see that we will experience great sorrow when we see fellow believers taking sin lightly, Ps 119:158 says "I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word." I see that we will experience revulsion at the thought of the tainting of sin.

Ps 101:3 says, "I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me." This verse doesn't say he hates those that turn aside out of the right way, he hates their works. This is hard for us, as humans, to separate. We see the sin and the sinner as one complete and inseparable entity. But God somehow, in His great lovingkindness and tender mercy, still manages to completely love the sinner, and completely hate his sin. I am not sure if we can ever achieve this successfully but God, Who desires us to practice lovingkindness and tender mercy, will give us grace.

Nevertheless, the verse continues, 'it shall not cleave to me!' It is such a strong phrase - it says plainly that sin in all its guises should be abhorrent to the point of absolute disgust!

We should fervently avoid being 'tarred with the same brush' as those that turn aside. We do not want even a smudge of complacency to mar us. Ps 119:128b - "I hate every false

way." Sometimes the only way we will know quickly when something is truly suspect, is by staying close to God. Listen for His voice. Spending quality time in the truth will guarantee quick reflexes when sin comes calling in any costume.

Let us keep close to God, let us trust His Word as true and infallible, and let us have a rapid response time when sin thinks it has an 'in'.

For those of us who are struggling, remember, there is mercy with God. Psalm 119:176 says, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant: for I do not forget thy commandments." The first step is to admit we are astray. This doesn't necessarily mean that we are a million miles from where we should be, one step off God's way is astray. Secondly, we must have the desire to be brought back to where God wants us to be. We must be prepared to humble ourselves before God and others. Lastly, cleave to God and His Word. This is where we left the path, cleaving will put us back on it.

by Joye Binstead

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Out of the Mouths of Babes and Ducklings -

Every once in a while animals are called on to serve God. Balaam's ass, and Elijah's ravens, Jesus' donkey, and Peter's rooster all had work to do for God. Our son Jeremy was memorising Psalm 8:2 once when he was small and misquoted it, "Out of the mouths of babes and ducklings..." We all laughed and the saying became part of our family folklore, "Babes and ducklings..." The other night our daughter Joanna came home from a cooking demo and collapsed exhausted in a bean bag to rest for a bit. Their pet parrot, a rainbow lorikeet, feeling lonely, hurried over to her and climbed up the bean bag and on to her blouse so it was sitting just in front of her mouth and then said to her, "Jesus loves you."

The funny thing is she had never heard it say those words before. Out of the mouths of babes and lorikeets..... - Ed.

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Links In the Media Chain -

So, tell me again what dynamic equivalency does for me?

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/octoberweb-only/son-of-god-translation-guidelines.html>

Piers Morgan's interview with the Osteens (insights into the evangellyfish/ prosperity mindset)

<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1110/04/pmt.01.html>

The narcissist gospel -

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/joel-osteen-feel-good-gospel-is-part-of-gods-calling-55617/>

* DOJ: Feds Can Tell Church Who Its Ministers Will Be -

http://cnsnews.com/blog/terence-p-jeffrey/doj-feds-can-tell-church-who-its-ministers-will-be?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+delicious%2Fgqlf+%28Christian+Headlines+Top+Headlines%29

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Eddy-Torial –

What Happens When The Saints Tremble At The Word Of God?

Forty years ago one of my old Bible college teachers died in the pulpit, in the middle of his sermon. He paused, stepped back from the pulpit, sat down, laid aside his earthly tabernacle, and was ushered by the angels into Heaven's gates.

I often reflect on the things he taught us. In the photo album of my heart, his page is especially precious to me, with the corners of the page well worn from turning. The memory that moves me most is not one I saw for myself. A friend gave it to me. The old preacher spoke in chapel one week, and my friend told me he peeked during the prayer before the sermon. To his surprise, the old preacher was kissing the pages of his Bible. That touched me so deeply that I never forgot it. Kissing the pages of his Bible!

The Golden Keys

Why did his simple, secret act of devotion to the Word of God speak to my heart so powerfully? For me, it was the dawning of a great truth, a truth which has grown in magnitude over the years until it has become an overpowering impetus to my soul. The truth is this --- [A man's attitudes and responses to the Word of God are the keys to his godliness](#). Tell me how a man treats his Bible, how he handles the Holy Scriptures, how he receives and responds to the words of God, and I think I can tell you his life story.

I have learned that when men tremble at the Words of the Lord, sceptics tend to be few and far between. Exodus 19 records no German rationalists in the congregation when Israel trembled before the voice of God at Sinai. When Ezra read the law to the remnant of Israel and they trembled at the Word of the Lord, the text is wonderfully silent on the subject of higher criticism. Israel was too busy trembling at the Word of the Lord to be sceptical. Have you ever noticed how Griesbach, Lachmann, and Semler, Aland, and all their sceptical disciples vanish like mist before the burning sun when holy men tremble at the Bible . Mssrs. Westcott and Hort are nowhere to be found. It is painfully obvious that critics have no fellowship with those who tremble at the Word of God. I have read enough of Westcott and Hort to perceive that they had no interest in the evangelistic meetings of D.L. Moody or Gypsy Smith. Hudson Taylor and George Muller were no heroes of those who love the

Serpent's whisperings. Arrogant and critical men tend to avoid the bold preaching of the gospel. These critics are unaware that their judgment is near. Proverbs 13:13 reads, "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed, but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded." Surely, the need of the hour is for God's men to tremble when they preach the Word of God, and to do so in faith. Then men will tremble once more before the God of Heaven and before His Words!

I have also learned that blessing comes down when we tremble at God's Word. Christmas Evans knew very little English and preached almost entirely in Welsh. His fiery preaching brought many to Christ, that they rejoiced in their Saviour loudly. Many English preachers accused him of excess. One of his critics came to hear Evans for himself, so Evans attempted to translate a phrase here and there into English for his guest's benefit. So powerful was the Word of the Lord from the lips of the old one-eyed preacher, even when he preached in Welsh, that the English preacher, smitten with conviction, cried out, "Is this my dear Saviour? Lead me to him!!!"

It makes a difference if the preacher trembles at the Word of God!

Buddy Smith

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