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Do You Ignore the Warnings? Parents Are Stewards

By Harold Turner

By Allen C. Isbell

In the very early part of his ministry, Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." He then gave a guideline by which these may be identified. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. 7:15-20. Fruit is the evidence or the product that identifies one with his purpose or claims. Hence, the fruit of a teacher is what he teaches. False teachers are not altogether identified by their moral values or by their attitudes toward others, but rather by what they teach. Jesus continued to show that such standards did not distinguish the true from the false. He showed that some who preached in his name, who hated sin, who did many wonderful works would be lost. Why? Even with all these fine qualities, Jesus said, "I never knew you." They had never been saved. They were religious, yes, but they were religiously wrong, and thereby lost. (Matt. 7:21-23.)

If, one day, our local authorities announced that there were one thousand counterfeit ten dollar bills circulating in our area, would you become alarmed? Would you take a closer look at every ten dollar bill in your possession, and all that you received in exchange? Would anyone contend that it didn't make any difference, that one was just as good as the other? Surely we would be concerned, and rightly so.

Yet in spite of the warnings of Jesus and the apostles regarding false teachers and false religions, many people are not alarmed, and refuse to examine closely their religious faith and practices, and many openly contending that it doesn't really make any difference as long as you are sincere. Haven't you ever been sincerely wrong about something? Did being sincere make the wrong right?

The apostle John warned, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John 4:1. John uses the word spirit referring to the prophets or teachers. His emphasis is that we believe not everything we hear religiously, but that we examine the teaching in light of truth.

The apostle Paul warned, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts

shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables." 2 Tim. 4:3-4. Is this true? Is it possible today? How can we know if we follow truth or fables unless we examine it? To blindly close our eyes to the matter and refuse to consider the possibility of error will not make it go away, nor will it make the consequences any less severe.

Just how serious is it to follow a false teaching? Notice Paul's appeal to the churches in Galatia, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Gal. 1:6-9. What had happened here? Someone had changed the true gospel that the apostles preached. What was the results? It caused some of these Christians to follow it, and in doing this they had removed themselves from Christ — fallen from grace. In Gal. 3:1 Paul wrote, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth . . ." These had been deceived by false teachers, can't we? It caused them to fall from grace, won't it do the same to us?

Satan is the king of deceit. He does everything in his power to cause us to come up short in our relationship to Christ. In 2 Corinthians 11:14-15 Paul wrote that Satan would transform himself into an angel of light, and his ministers also would have the appearance of ministers of righteousness. What is his purpose in this? Obviously to deceive people from the love of the truth. Notice Paul's warning in 2 Thess. 2:9-10, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not a love of the truth, that they might be saved." Why would these perish? They were deceived

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If a child grows up and is indifferent to the church, God will demand an explanation from the parents. Parents are stewards of their children. This is an incomparable task. The most fearful thought a father can have is that he may fail this task. "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Eph. 6:4.)

Abraham was chosen to charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord. (Gen. 18:19.) God's people of the Old Testament were told, "And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart and you shall teach them diligently to your children. (Deut. 6:4-6.)

Some of God's best people failed this awesome task. Eli was one. The Bible says, "The sons of Eli were worthless men; they had no regard for the Lord." (1 Sam. 2:12.) Not a few Christian parents have tasted bitter tears because their children grew up without regard for the Lord. The bitterness is enhanced because the parent often knows that he planted the seeds of disinterest when the child was young.

Today, parents are too permissive. If the teenager does not want to attend church, the parent permits him to follow his own inclinations. This allows the children to believe that attendance is optional, which it is not. If the teenager wants to engage in morally dangerous activity, the parents accede to his wishes. This weakness in authority can only issue in a bitter harvest.

We will inevitably fail our challenging task as parents if we do not return to a kind but firm discipline and instruction. God has placed parents over the family for a good reason. If he desired the children to set family policy, He would have so ordered it.

Gospel Meeting

The church that meets at Welcome Hill, Ark. will have brother John Dale for a gospel meeting June 22-27, 7:30 p.m. each evening. The public is welcome to attend this spiritual fellowship in the study of God's word.

The Fulton County Gospel News

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Young People and Faith

By Coy Walters

"Count it all joy when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (James 1:2-3 RSV.) This is only one of the many passages where James lays stress on the individual's faith. The emphasis that James puts on faith shows that there is something to be believed and something which demands our trust. This is the emphasis that our young people sorely need today.

This writer, while still a teenager, had a friend who was not very religious. This friend knew that I had a religious background and strong beliefs. Once when talking about this he made this remark, "Everybody needs something to believe in besides himself." This young man had witnessed some of the frustrations of life. There is indeed an emptiness in the life of any person who is not serving the Master—the God of heaven.

In this article I do not intend to try to convince the unbeliever of his need for God, but to those who have a Christian background I hope to show in selections from the book of James what our faith should include.

A heart of faith will inquire of God for wisdom, and that wisdom will be evident in his life. The Scripture records, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him. But, let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind." (James 1:5-6). "Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace'ul, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty of insincerity." (James 3:13-14,17.)

Do you seek God for the wisdom that you need? Guys, do you seek your wisdom from the gang at school, the locker room, Sports Illustrated, Paul Harvey, TV, or do you seek wisdom that comes only from God and His word? Girls, do you seek your wisdom from your friends, some true story magazine, Forecast, Co-ed, other books, TV, or from God and His word? You can look into your life and from what God has said be able to discern. Is your life one of

jealousy, selfishness — always thinking of yourself rather than the other person? If so, your wisdom has not come from God. Many of the frustrations of the teenage years will vanish if one will rely on God. Reread what God said in James 3:17. Wouldn't it be great to have these traits as part of your life? According to this, true wisdom will eliminate uncertainty and insincerity. Can you believe that? Wouldn't it be great if our young people didn't have the "I don't care attitude? It is possible, but only with a heart of faith which seeks the real answers of life from God.

Another thing, according to God's word, that true faith will include is a love for all mankind. It does not show respect of persons, "My brethren, show no partiality as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. If you really fulfill the royal law, according to the scripture, you shall love your neighbor as yourself." (James 2:1, 8.) (Read the entire passage in James 2:1-13 to get the entire picture that James teaches his fellow Christians.) Young people, do you look on all your classmates with love? Do you want them to come to church with you to learn about the "abundant life"? Do you ask them only if you like them? Do you show partiality to those who are "better-off" at school? What about the color of his skin? Does it make a difference whether you love his soul or not? What about the way he or she dresses, do you shun those who are less fortunate than you and who aren't able to dress as neat as you?

I hope that you are beginning to get the point that James is trying to make. True faith and respect of persons cannot both be a part of the same individual. Ask God for help to strengthen you in this area and then go out and practice it. To know the whole of God's teaching and yet fail to show it in one's life and work is to have the most miserable life a believer can know.

Other thoughts in James will be discussed next month.

"Brooding over one's troubles insures a perfect hatch."

"The only salvation that holds out is the salvation that is worked out."

"True greatness is measured by the capacity to serve."

"Worldliness is human activity with God left out."

Do Your Own Road Work

By Ted Knight

Joe Frazier, one time heavyweight champion of the boxing world, has said, "The thing about it is, you got to do your own roadwork. Nobody can do it for you. If you cheat on that in the dark of the morning, you'll get found out under the bright lights. Lots of times when I've done four and one half miles of roadwork and don't want to go the other half, I say to myself, Nobody would know but me. But, brother, that's the last guy I want to fool!"

Joe Frazier knew that even though he was the heavyweight champion of the world with all of it's money and power, there were some things that he had to do for himself. He could not buy a body that would absorb the punches of an opponent nor the power to defeat another fighter. The physical condition that such a feat called for was something that he could get only through hard work. It he didn't do it the whole world would see the results.

Brother, the only person who can successfully live the Christian life for YOU is YOU. Nobody can do YOUR personal work, visit YOUR sick, teach YOUR class, give YOUR money, attend YOUR services, or any of the other things we are called upon as individuals to do. There is a place that only YOU can fill and a task that only YOU can perform. YOU cannot transfer those responsibilities that are YOUR'S to the shoulders of another.

We may try to cheat on this in this life, but if we do we will be found out under the light of God's judgment. Even the secret things will be brought to light then. (Eccl. 12:13.) Those things which we may have successfully hidden away from others will be revealed then.

Let's stop fooling ourselves! If we
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Watch For Their Souls IX

By W. R. Smith

"The church is on the march" where the leadership is strong and Christian enough to move the congregation consistently and with increasing speed towards the ideal — "Holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:27.) Unquestionably, this task calls for a particular type of servant. The very fact that the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to set the standards for leaders so high in 1 Timothy and Titus proves this very point. Many who are incompetent have been chosen for this function. It is pathetic in the extreme that so many churches have ignored the divine specifications in choosing their bishops. In this sphere our practices are inconsistent with our preaching in another area. We insist that non-members who want to be saved must follow precisely without deviation the divine pattern. Yet, in too many places when elders are chosen, we all but throw away the pattern and follow our own set of qualifications! This is positively as offensive to God as it is for a sinner to devise and follow his own plan of salvation. (Rom. 10:3).

On the other hand, congregations which have diligently adhered to "a thus saith the Lord" in designating those who "rule over them" are in position to move with accelerated speed towards the goal. Moving with a stepped-up rate simply means that an ever-increasing number of people are being influenced daily by the gospel and drawn Godward. A leader has followers, and the best leaders set the pace for multitudes to be drawn closer to God. Effective leadership is the church's greatest need at the moment.

The tragedy of indifference within the membership of the church and numberless lost souls without seems very definitely not to affect very seriously too many leaders. Godly men in a position to act and save so many souls should be deeply concerned. They will prove their anxiety or lack of it by the amount of time spent in devising ways and means to step up the rate of soul saving. Formulating and executing plans to indoctrinate church members is just as essential as bringing more people into the body of Christ. Indoctrination would include generating "team work", or concerted action in our Bible classes, worship, teaching, moral standards of conduct, and benevolence towards the needy. The most difficult part of such a program is to get unity — cooperation — "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." This harmony is most difficult to achieve among members who have a very meager grasp of their relations and functions as members of the body of Christ. This is

the reason a high type of skill in leadership and a full measure of righteousness are "musts" among those upon whose shoulders rests the final outcome of those for whom they must give an accounting. (Heb. 13:17).

In any planning by the leaders to build up the spiritual temperature of the cold and lukewarm, the congregation must go along with some new and different procedure. The best test of effective leadership on the part of the elders is whether they can "sell" the congregation on better ways of getting desired results. For example, should they want to adopt the practice in Lord's day assemblies of having every person present—members, visitors, and non-members—to fill out a simple attendance card, how successful would the venture prove to be? Without a period of conditioning it would fail miserably and embarrassingly. Good leadership would never attempt any great changes from traditional practices without first educating the congregation. Sometimes slight changes in the order of the worship, like having the communion, prayer, or some other activity at different times in the worship period, will prove emotionally upsetting. Hence, the maximum degree of Christian leadership must be exercised to direct the congregation to do what it has not been doing. What are some desirable or indispensable objectives?

A successful football team requires that every member contribute his part with split-second timing to the over-all effort. In like manner, a successful church must have the benefit of every member's talents, time, means, and service. The bishops have a scriptural right to expect it. Given good leadership and a reasonable period of time teaching or indoctrinating, any congregation could have the unity that characterized the church at Jerusalem. (Acts 4:32.) Under this plan of "one heart and one soul" every member, as in the case of the football team, is doing his part—bearing fruit, John 15:2—according to his ability. (Matt. 25:14.) Those who are overtaken in a fault or fail to play their part on the team would receive help from the brethren. (Rom. 15:1.) A hurried move to rescue the perishing will bring, in most cases, immediate and desirable results. For the few, a longer period of treatment will be necessary. One now and then may have to be severely disciplined—disfellowshipped. The obvious aim of this chastening is to save the disorderly church member.

A congregation set in order to produce the maximum results in seeking and saving the lost will need a full-time

man, one of the elders preferably, to execute or coordinate the well-laid-out-plans. Remember, please, that these plans were at first proposed by the leaders and later, many months later, approved by the congregation. With a file of workers on one hand and a file of jobs on the other, the coordinator will get the maximum amount of work done by calling and assigning the members who have agreed to function in this way as a worker in the vineyard. (Matt. 20:1-5, James 2:24). Knowing the workers' skills and abilities, the coordinator will assign only qualified members to do the tasks which demand a particular type of skill. Only a limited number will be qualified to counsel with certain types of ills so often found among the members. Every service rendered will be duly reported and recorded on the personnel card of the worker and the patient or one needing help. At the end of any given period a report of services can be compiled and made available to the membership. Such a report is calculated to inspire others to join the Lord's army and render hearty service to God in His yearning for the salvation of every creature.

There is no challenge which faces the church today more serious than that of watching for the souls of church members. (Heb. 13:17).

Do Your Own Roadwork (Cont.)

want to go to heaven then let's do our own roadwork. The road to heaven is narrow and sometimes difficult to travel. But, you must do your own roadwork. Nobody else can do it for you.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58).

"The trouble with people today is that they want to reach the Promised Land without going through the Wilderness."

"Conceit is what makes a little squirt think he is a fountain of knowledge."

"In the Christian life, surrender is the first step toward victory."

"The cure for stealing is found in giving (Eph. 4:28)."

"God's way for growing big men is to give them big jobs."

A New Convent Promised

By W. F. Cawyer
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Some six hundred years before Christ was born, the prophet Jeremiah wrote about God's promise of a new covenant, saying, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:31-34.)

From this we notice that God promised to make a NEW covenant with the house of Israel. He had made a covenant with them at Mount Sinai shortly after delivering them from Egypt. That covenant consisted of the ten commandments (1 Kings 8:9, 21, Deut. 4:13, 5:1-3) the fourth of which was regarding the sabbath day. But now God said that he would make a NEW covenant that would not be like the one that He made with them at Sinai. The covenant given at Sinai encompassed only the nation of Israel (Deut. 5:1-3), but the NEW covenant God promised would be for all people. The first covenant was written on tables of stone, but the NEW covenant would be put in their inward parts and written in the heart. Israel came under the first covenant by birth, then as they grew up they were taught who God was, but not so under the NEW covenant; no man can become a child of God without first knowing the Lord. Under the covenant made at Sinai there was no forgiveness of sins (Heb. 10:1-4), but under the NEW covenant, God said, "I will remember their sin no more." Now imagine men trying to bind upon people a law under which there is no forgiveness! This is exactly what is being done by the sabbath day advocates.

Long before the promise of which Jeremiah wrote, God had made two promises to Abraham. One of these promises was concerning the nation of Israel and the land of Canaan recorded in

Gen. 17:6-8, "And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." The second promise given Abraham was concerning the spiritual seed, which would be fulfilled in Christ. In Gen. 12:2-3 God said to Abraham, "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; And I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." This promise is later renewed in Isaac. Gen. 21:12.

Many years later the apostle Paul wrote in the book of Galatians, "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:8, 16, 29.) Hence, we must come under the new covenant and to Christ, who is the seed of the promise, through which all nations are blessed in the forgiveness of sins.

God has fulfilled both promises. He brought forth Isaac, the son of Abraham, through which the nation of Israel came, and gave unto them the land of Canaan. He also brought forth the spiritual Seed — Christ — making salvation possible for all who will come to Him.

Moses, speaking by inspiration said in Deut. 18:15-19, that God would raise up a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken. Our next article will deal with the study of "That Prophet"

"The things we do are our loud speakers."

"There is only one right way, and a multitude of wrong ones."

Do You Ignore (Cont.)

from a love of the truth, the only assurance of salvation. Jesus had said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32.

How can we know that we are not being deceived? The truth is a spotlight that reveals the false, deceptive teachings in today's religious world. We must "Study to show ourselves approved unto God". (2 Tim. 2:15) We must "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess. 5:21.) We must "Search the scriptures daily, whether those things are so." (Acts 17:11). We must be willing to accept that there is but one true way (John 14:6), only one true gospel (Gal. 1:8-9), only one true church (Mat. 16:18, Eph. 1:22-23, 4:4), only one true faith (Eph. 4:5), and believing the Bible truths regarding each of these, we must be willing to search for these truths and apply them to our lives. We must remember that "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God . . ." (2 John 9.)

"Be not deceived, God is not mocked!" To ignore the warnings of God is to ignore His love, which desires to protect us from deception, and eternal destruction. Take your stand on the word of God, and demand a "thus saith the Lord" for what you believe and practice religiously.

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