

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

Established 1953

March 2008

Vol. 42 / No. 3

YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

by Chris Perry

I have recently stuck my head into the world of flat-panel televisions. My wife and I (well, really just me, but my wife has at least given her consent) are considering buying one, and I decided to do my due diligence and research the best brands, prices, etc. What I discovered was interesting but not surprising: you get what you pay for. Two televisions, comparable in size and features, might vary by as much as \$500, and many consumers run to the stores to sweep up these inexpensive models (called second- and third-tier brands by the service industry). Interestingly, many of them respond incredulously when their “great deal” goes on the fritz. Internet blogs and consumer reporting agencies are overflowing with complaints concerning the performance of these cheap televisions, as well as the service provided by the low-tier manufacturers. One popular internet electronics reviewer, known as “HD Guru,” in an article entitled *Your New Disposable Flat-Panel HDTV*, remarked that “what you basically get when you buy a [particular name-brand] is a disposable HDTV—think paper towel.” He investigated the in- and out-of-warranty return/repair policies of many off-brand manufacturers, only to find that either the prices were outrageous for shipping/parts or there was no repair assistance offered at all.

In my investigation, I learned a

few useful facts about buying flat-panel televisions. Interestingly enough, these lessons have some very serious parallels in the religious world. Consider the following points and their application:

First, my decline into the depths of the electronics world taught me that **we should expect to get what we pay for**. One internet poster made the following comment following HD Guru’s article: “As a veteran of 35+ years in the electronics business (20+ in retail and 10+ in wholesale), I am constantly amazed at the consumer that demands cheaper, cheaper, cheaper, and then is surprised when the unit is no good.” Something in modern American society has fostered the get-something-for-nothing ideal, a stark contrast to the so-called “Protestant work ethic” of generations past. When two comparable televisions differ so greatly in price, the consumer should expect that price difference to be reflected somewhere.

Does the same principle not apply to the religious world? Mainstream religion today claims magnificent benefits while costing very little. The Joel Osteens and Joyce Meyers, the *Purpose-Driven Life’s* and the *Chicken Soup for the Soul’s*, all offer quick fixes and religiosity without the demand for extensive life changes. They give us shallow insights into our finances or marriages, they make us feel good about our situations (however sinful),

and they allow us to lay our heads down at night without guilt or concern. But where are those quick fixes and shallow insights when the really tough questions come up? They fall short if they do not provide Biblical answers. And most importantly, how are these watered-down religions going to hold up when eternity stands before us? Jesus points out their eternal shortcomings:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:21-23).

Imagine a man or woman who has followed some semblance of Christianity for some time, only to realize ultimately that he was never following Christ! He will respond with disbelief, “But what about the feeling I had? What about the assurance I felt? What about the worship I thought I gave you, the prayers I thought were reaching you?” But place the two options side-by-side, and the difference becomes clear. New Testament Christianity demands a change from the old man to the new man (Colossians 3:9-10; Romans 6:6; 2 Corinthians 5:17). It requires repentance, or a change of lifestyle, attitude, and thought (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; 2 Peter 3:9). It requires complete obedience to the will of God, including baptism and proper worship (Acts 2:38; Mark

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

USPS Publication #211780

. . . is a Periodical publication issued monthly by the Church of Christ at Third and Bethel (P.O. Box 251), Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0251. **POSTMASTER: Please mail all changes of address to the above address.**

FCGN is mailed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name we must have a complete address, including number and street name, or R.R. or HCR number, plus box number, or a P.O. Box number and the **NINE DIGIT ZIP CODE**. This paper is supported by voluntary contributions for which we are grateful. Financial information will be furnished upon request. **Mail all address corrections or manuscripts to:**

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

P.O. Box 251

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

Lee MosesEDITOR
Phone(870) 625-3217
E-Mailcocfcgn@centurytel.net
Websitewww.fultoncountygospelnews.org
Brian DixonWebmaster
E-Mailhalopages@yahoo.com

continued from page 1

16:16; Matthew 28:20; John 4:24; Colossians 3:17). It requires a faithful daily walk with the burdens of this life (Luke 9:23; 1 John 1:7) and a consideration of these requirements before undertaking the responsibility (Luke 14:27-33). How foolish is it to do less than what God requires and still expect the blessings that come **only** from complete obedience? If we buy into cut-rate religion, we should expect cut-rate results.

It also occurred to me while researching flat-panel televisions that **I don't understand how something that can cost between \$700 and \$4000 is disposable!** As one blogger put it, "Some of these lower cost brands have great pictures to go along with the low price; now I'm not sure if I should take a chance on them knowing what I know now. As for [brand name], I don't consider anything that costs \$1149 to be 'disposable'." To that I say, Amen.

But now consider that same idea from a spiritual perspective. Aren't our souls worth more than flat-panel televisions? Jesus surely thought so: "*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*" (Matthew 16:26). Why, then, do so many treat their souls as if they are disposable? Many take whichever religion is cheapest or most convenient, with little or no investigation. Others still give no thought to the care and upkeep of their souls, allowing them to fall into disrepair through neglect and carelessness. The disciples asked Jesus, "*Carest thou not that we perish?*" (Mark 4:38). The question might today be framed differently: **Carest we not that we perish?** No wonder Paul commanded us to "*study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15). The Bereans "*were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so*" (Acts 17:11). Though an inspired apostle was preaching, these Christians-to-be were not about to take their eternal destinies lightly. And neither should any person today.

Flat-panel televisions and the final destinations of our eternal souls are miles apart in importance. However, the same logic that applies to one physically should apply to the other spiritually. Are you willing to settle for low-tier religion? Are you willing to bet your soul on a cheap imposter of the church for which Jesus died and shed His blood? Take care of your future—ensure that you will enjoy the bliss of heaven for eternity. Remember: You get what you pay for!

303 DeKalb Street
McMinnville, TN 37110

BUT THE BIBLE DOESN'T SAY NOT TO . . .

by Lee Moses

"But the Bible doesn't say **not** to!" This is the defense many make when asked why they engage in the religious practices they do.

"Why do you have mammoth theatrical productions in worship?" "The Bible doesn't say **not** to!"

"Why do you worship God with mechanical instruments of music?" "The Bible doesn't say **not** to!"

"Why do you have a birthday celebration for Jesus?" "The Bible doesn't say **not** to!"

"Why do you sprinkle babies and call it baptism?" "The Bible doesn't say **not** to!"

Since God does not specifically say **not** to do something, the reasoning goes, it must be permitted. But is this reasoning reasonable? Does the Bible permit that which it does not expressly forbid?

A Universal Principle?

The reason many feel that **Bible** silence permits is because they believe that **all** silence permits. "The court system will not imprison someone for breaking a law that isn't on the books—how could God condemn a practice He has never directly addressed?" Certainly, there are times in our society when silence permits—but is this universally true? Can one always do what is not specifically forbidden?

If an employer sends an employee to purchase paper towels for the restroom, what will the employer's response be if the employee returns with paper towels **and** new paper towel dispensers? The employee might respond, "You didn't tell me **not** to get paper towel dispensers." However,

this would be immaterial—the employer said nothing about getting paper towel dispensers; therefore, the employee was not authorized at that time to purchase them.

Picture a mother telling her children, “You may go outside to play in the yard.” What if those children proceed to play in the yard for a few minutes, and then go across the street to play at the park? One can imagine the ensuing conversation:

“I said you could play in the **yard.**”

“We **did** play in the yard!”

“But I **only** said you could play in the yard—not in the yard **and** at the park.”

Clearly, the children were not allowed to play at the park, but why? The mother never specifically stated that the children could **not** play at the park. The mother was silent about the park, and thus permission was not granted to play at the park.

If a teacher sends a disorderly student to the principal’s office, is it acceptable if that student makes a quick detour over to the Coke machine? “But you didn’t say **not** to!”

Can anyone in any situation really say that authorization has been **granted** if no one in authority has said anything on the matter one way or the other? Evidently, silence cannot always be equated with permission; it quite often equates to prohibition. So why would so many make the leap to say that the silence of the Scriptures permits?

God Tells Us How to View His Silence

Obviously, the Bible does not **directly** address every issue that mankind faces today; yet we are assured, “[God’s] divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). Sometimes the Bible teaches by implication—for example, the Bible does not directly address drug use; but because of its exhortation to “be

sober” while it condemns drunkenness (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8; 1 Corinthians 6:10; Galatians 5:23), one must infer that recreational intoxication of any type is displeasing to God. But even when the Bible is completely silent on an issue, the Bible somehow teaches how we should respond to that issue. There are only two possibilities with regard to the silence of the Scriptures: (1) The silence of the Scriptures permits, or (2) The silence of the Scriptures forbids.

The Holy Spirit instructs us that we are to have authority for all we do: “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him*” (Colossians 3:17, emphasis LM). If one were to hear banging at his door accompanied by a gruff, “Open up **in the name of the law**”; he would know exactly what his visitor meant—the law gave the police officer **authority** to compel the homeowner to open his door. The officer could not compel anyone to open his door **in the name of the law** until he first obtained **authority** of the law. Before we can do anything “*in the name of the Lord Jesus,*” we must obtain authority of the Lord Jesus (see also Acts 4:7), which authority can only be found in His testament (the New Testament) in the Bible. The Bible gives us everything we need for Christian doctrine and practice, completely furnishing the Christian for “*every good work*” (2 Timothy 3:16-17; compare with 2 Peter 1:3). If there is a good work, the Bible instructs us in it. If the Bible does not instruct us in it, it is not a good work. Since we are commanded to “*Prove (‘Test,’ New King James Version) all things; hold fast that which is good*” while we must “*Abstain from all appearance of evil*” (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; compare with Psalm 119:104), anything the Bible does not authorize explicitly or implicitly must be rejected.

The Israelites were given a general principle—“*Ye shall not add*

unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Deuteronomy 4:2). For one to “add” to God’s word, one would have to foray into areas where He is silent. The principle of “not adding” to God’s word continues throughout the Scriptures:

Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar (Proverbs 30:6).

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Revelation 22:18-19).

God has given us boundaries within which we must remain. **These boundaries are defined by His word.** Paul wrote several things to the Corinthians “*that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written*” (1 Corinthians 4:6, American Standard Version). The apostle John wrote, “*Whosoever transgresseth (‘goeth onward,’ ASV), and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son*” (2 John 9). One must remain within the confines of Christ’s doctrine, the New Testament, or that person has fellowship with neither God nor Christ. When one acts where the New Testament is silent, he has gone onward from the doctrine of Christ.

The Bible teaches us how to view its silence—and emphatically declares that its silence prohibits. Of Jesus Christ the inspired writer penned, “*For if he were on earth, he should not be a*

priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law” (Hebrews 8:4). Notice that it does not say He could not be a priest on earth because the law said **He couldn’t**—it says He could not be a priest on earth because the law only authorized certain others (descendants of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi) to serve as priests. “For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake **nothing** concerning priesthood” (7:14, emphasis LM). Moses’ **silence** concerning the tribe of Judah serving as priests **forbade** those of the tribe of Judah serving as priests—even Jesus. Friend, if even our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was constrained from acting where the word of God was silent, how much more should we be constrained by the silence of the Scriptures?

God will not condemn anyone for breaking a law that “isn’t on the books.” However, God has given us a general law regarding His silence which **is** “on the books.” There may be numerous religious practices the world can conjure which are neither authorized nor expressly forbidden in the Bible. However, when the Bible teaches us that we are not to add (religious practices or otherwise) to God’s word, we are forbidden from practicing them, and condemned when we do.

CONCLUSION

Probably no one who would profess to be a Christian would say that **anything** not specifically forbidden would be an acceptable religious practice. However, no doubt many will continue to defend their desired religious practices with the excuse, “But the Bible doesn’t say **not** to!” However, the idea that silence permits is neither universal nor Biblical. As we consider what religious practices to continue, let us not make the excuse, “The Bible doesn’t say **not** to”—let us each rather say, “I will just do what the Bible says to do.”

FEBRUARY CONTRIBUTIONS

CHURCHES

Viola Church of Christ (Viola, AR) . . .	25.00
Moko Church of Christ (Moko, AR) . . .	50.00
Viola Church of Christ (Viola, AR) . . .	25.00
Dellhalf Church of Christ (Myrtle, MO)	30.00
Agnos Church of Christ (Agnos, AR)	50.00
Oak Grove Church of Christ (Walnut Ridge, AR)	25.00
Church of Christ (Bakersfield, MO) . . .	50.00
Poughkeepsie Church of Christ (Poughkeepsie, AR)	50.00
Sturkie Church of Christ (Sturkie, AR)	25.00
Lowell Church of Christ (Springdale, AR)	50.00
Elizabeth Church of Christ (Elizabeth, AR)	25.00
Camp Church of Christ (Camp, AR)	35.00
Moody Church of Christ (West Plains, MO)	50.00
Clarkridge Church of Christ (Clarkridge, AR)	75.00
Gospel Hill Church of Christ (Pottersville, MO)	100.00
Crossroads Church of Christ (Gepp, AR)	100.00
Pilot Church of Christ (Mammoth Spring, AR)	100.00
Church of Christ (Marion, IL)	25.00
Souder Church of Christ (Wasola, MO)	100.00
Jeff Church of Christ (Thayer, MO)	25.00
Wheeling Church of Christ (Salem, AR)	50.00

INDIVIDUALS

Gary & Ann Wilson (Hot Springs, AR)	35.00
Wilene & Luceile (Franklin, AR)	20.00
Hazel Stokes (West Plains, MO)	10.00
Lavern Trussell (Clyde, TX)	25.00
Charles and Joan Tostige (Falmouth, MI)	50.00
Anomymous (Indiana)	20.00
Anomymous (Oklahoma)	50.00
Anomymous (Oklahoma)	50.00
Mark & Tina Lance (Chalmette, LA)	25.00

GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God’s commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

CHURCH OF CHRIST
 P.O. BOX 251
 MAMMOTH SPRING, AR 72554
 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Periodical Postage
 Paid At
 Mammoth Spring, AR
 72554-0998
 Publication #211780