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"THOU ART THE MAN"

(II Sam. 12:7)

In II Samuel, chapter 12, we read of a very unusual, and human interest account, and yet it is as true to human nature as if it were written today. There was one of the greatest of all Israel's leaders who decided to take matters into his own hands and make "Might to be right". This man could murder his fellow man, and yet he seemed to have a heart filled with truth and compassion. Now, how can this be said of the same man?

David caused a man to be murdered and, apparently with a clear conscience, he then took the man's wife for his own. This would indicate a man without a heart, but may we take a close look at David's heart. Nathan came to him and told of a man who owned many sheep. One day this man had guests in his home and instead of killing one of the sheep from his own flock, he went to a neighbor's home, who only had one lamb, which he loved very dearly, and took this lamb and had it slain to serve his guests for food. Upon hearing of such heartless creature, David became very angry and demanded the life of a man, who would so sin against his neighbor. David had killed a man; the man of which Nathan spoke had taken and slain his neighbor's lamb. David seemed to think the sin of taking the lamb was greater than his sin, for he demanded the life of the man of whom Nathan spoke, but spoke NOTHING concerning himself.

Now, from the lips of Nathan, came words that shocked and changed the attitude and heart of a great king; "Thou art the man". Then, for the first time, no doubt, David was seeing himself as God saw him and the picture was one of horror. I am sure that you now can have a desire to condemn David for magnifying his neighbor's sins and minimizing his own; but wait just one minute. "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone", so now may we examine self.

The Bible teaches that the man who is not baptized will be lost (Mk. 16:16). We say, "What a sinner, how can anyone be so blind and stubborn as not to be baptized, does he not know he is without God and without hope"? Yes, this is true, but if you have been baptized and refuse to obey God, then read II Pet. 2:20-22

and see which is more condemned in the sight of God. The man who uses mechanical instruments to worship God, of him we say, "He cannot please God for God has not authorized such, it is not faith, so it is sin" (Rom. 14:23). Then we stay away from worship and worship God not at all. Read James 4:17 and see who has the greater sin. We say of the man who tithes, "God does not accept such offerings for this was a part of the law of Moses and this law was nailed to the cross" (Col. 2:14). Then upon the first day of the week we do not "lay by him in store as God prospered him" (I Cor. 16:2). Please read James 2:10 to see who has the greater sin the "tither" or the "short changer".

Much more could be written, but I am sure you see the point. Yes, by all means, remove the "beam" from your own eye before you try to remove the "mote" from the eye of your neighbor. David saw the "mote" in the other eye, but neither saw nor felt, the "beam" in his own eye. The next time you talk about the sins of others; stop for a minute and think, sin can keep a man out of heaven, and should God answer you, would he say, "THOU ART THE MAN". REMEMBER, WE DO NOT GO TO HEAVEN ON THE DEMERITS OF OTHERS, BUT ON OUR OWN MERITS.

Glynn V. Purdy

Dating and Marriage

Young Christians should be much concerned about whom they date and whom they marry realizing the seriousness and the consequences of their actions. A part of the proper training that parents should give their children is to impress upon them the importance of their marrying Christians.

Certainly this is the safe course to follow. Since dating leads to marriage the young Christian should exercise caution in his or her dating and not allow himself or herself to become too involved with an individual that would lead one away from the Lord.

In many places there are not enough young Christians to date or they may not

be attracted to each other and thus will date those who are not members of the church. In such instances young people ought to be honest with themselves and ponder such things as: Is this individual sincere, have high ideals, reasonable, openminded, interested in pleasing God? Does he or she attend services with you and indicate a desire to know something about the church or is he or she prejudiced against the church? If these questions cannot be answered favorably, such an individual is a poor risk for you even to continue to date.

Jesus taught that heaven is to be gained by a few who strive, seek and find the narrow way and who do the Father's will (Matt. 7:13, 14; Luke 13: 24; Matt. 7:21). In view of this we all need all the help we can get from this life-time companion. Such help will not and cannot come from a person who is not a Christian.

Listen, young Christian, if that boy or girl cannot be converted before marriage the odds are heavy against his or her being converted after marriage and also your making heaven your home if you marry that individual anyway. Some will say, "I will convert him later." How many do you know who have done so? On the other hand, how many do you know who have themselves become unfaithful because of such a marriage?

Consider some cases you do know about. Over the past seven years 14 young people who have at one time or another been members of this congregation have married those who are not members of the church. Of that 14 not a one, to my knowledge, has been able to convert his or her mate—there has been much unfaithfulness on the part of most of these members—at least 8 of this number do not now attend services at all (2 had quit before marriage) — there have been 3 divorces. Do you wonder why some faithful gospel preachers refuse to be parties to such marriages?

Count the cost. Is that boy or that girl you want to marry worth spending an eternity in hell for? What about children born into such a home — what chance will they have? Let that boy friend or girl friend see a real example of a Christian in you by your language and your conduct and your faithfulness—convert them first or forget them.

—Steve Hudgins, Ocala, Florida

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EDITORS: Clovis Ragsdale
and James E. Henley.

"DEPART FROM ME"

Matt. 25:41

Sad Words Indeed.

These words were stated by Jesus, as reflecting his statement to thousands at the judgment. These will be the FINAL words of Jesus to these people. He came into the world in the form of a baby, lived to manhood, suffered many horrors, and the cruel death on the cross, sent men into all the world to talk to these same people about being prepared to not have these words spoken to them. Millions of sermons have been preached, millions of Bibles sold, millions of dollars spent in mission work and millions of prayers in behalf of the lost, YET MILLIONS ARE LOST! WHY? EVEN MORE SAD BECAUSE OF WHOM THEY WERE SPOKEN TO

These words were NOT spoken to nonreligious people! They were spoken to those who thought they were prepared to meet God, Matt. 7:22! These people thought they were doing "wonderful" works in the "name" (authority) of Christ, only to learn too late that their religion was not authorized by Christ, but by the creeds of men! There are millions today who "think" they are following Jesus, but care not enough to check the Bible to be sure! No, everything in the name of religion is not pleasing to God. Ask yourself the question that Jesus asked concerning John's baptism, "Is it from heaven or from men"? If it is from heaven, stand fast, if from men, GIVE IT UP NOW WHILE YOU MAY STILL SAVE YOUR SOUL! Some day you will learn too late to save that precious soul. MEMBERS OF THE LORD'S CHURCH LISTEN AND LEARN

There are thousands of people who "belong to the church" who have never learned, or do not care, what the Lord

demands for eternal life. So many "go to church" once each week or less, not knowing that they are to BE the church and the church is not to forsake the assembling of itself together. Many members reach for that dollar on Sunday (that is BIG finance indeed when placed stretched full length across the collection plate) when the Lord has blessed them with one or two hundred dollars the week before! Then they pray LONG and LOUD for the sick, lost, hungry, orphan, widow, those in "hard" fields. Any time a man who drops a dollar in the collection out of one or two hundred per week, he is in the "hardest field" of all; the Devil's field! Yes, we are so concerned. We pray for the drunkard, those in adultery, the ignorant and those who know not God, yet how few members of the Lord's church know God. Remember many thought they knew him, and were ready to go into heaven, only to hear, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels", Matt. 25:41! WHY? Yes WHY? DO YOU NOT KNOW WHY?

Was it because they did not attend worship? Could have been. Was it because they were drunkards? Could have been. Was it because they had not heard of God? Could have been. Was it because they did not contribute enough to the Lord? Could have been. BUT IT WAS NOT EITHER! These people who thought they were ready for heaven were NOT; because they HAD NOT DONE THE FOLLOWING, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick, visited those in prison. The word visit means to SUPPLY their needs! Read this in Matthew 25. Now church member we are talking to you! HAVE YOU DONE THESE THINGS? IF NOT, YOU TOO, WILL HEAR, "DEPART FROM ME".

Glynn V. Purdy

The Clothes Are Coming Off Again

It never seems to fail. When the summer heat starts coming on the clothes start coming off. For some reason Christians seem to be no exception. They often have the shortest shorts, the scantiest swim-suits, the highest hemlines and lowest neck-lines — and the flimsiest excuses of anybody in town. It used to be that people were expected to be decently covered, but it is apparently no longer necessary to be decent or covered.

There really is no logical reason for going around in public half-dressed. But there are quite a number of psychological reasons for it. First there is the need to be noticed and admired — perhaps even to

be 'desired' by the opposite sex. Strange, though, how often these bare beauties get offended when some creep gets 'turned on' and makes an ungentlemanly remark or 'proposition' to them. Second, there is vanity. Those who are physically attractive, or think they are, will try to 'show off their assets' to the best advantage. Some 'grown-up' women evidently feel they must compete with their daughters for their 'fair share' of the attention and admiration of the male population. This is a sure sign of psychological inferiority. It is an effort to compensate for a lack of character.

Jesus met a man once "who had devils (evil spirits) a long time and wore no clothes". But when Christ cast the evil spirits out of him the man was found "at the feet of Jesus — clothed, and in his right mind (Luke 8:27,35). Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit of "the knowledge of good and evil," and they became aware of their nakedness (Gen. 3:11). They covered themselves with leaves to hide the fact of their nakedness, (shame) from each other. It would be nice if some such awareness of the shame of nakedness, suggestive behavior and immodest exposure could be passed around today.

It doesn't mean that I am opposed to comfort and fashion. I just happen to believe that comfort and fashion must yield to common sense, good taste, and respect for one's own character.

Jerry Shaw

FAITH, HOPE, CHARITY, No. 1

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1) This passage has often been called a statement containing some of the attributes of Bible faith. Faith is these things and more.

Faith is assurance or trust as the revised version has rendered this passage. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." True faith contains hope, evidence, trust, assurance, conviction and something more. Any word containing all of these powerful attributes truly must be a powerful motivating force when it is released in the heart.

Faith is that which causes man to please God. Hebrews 11:6. Faith cannot be produced by the wisdom of man, but faith stands in the power of God himself. 1 Corinthians 2:5. Faith is an abiding principle, 1 Corinthians 12:12, and by

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Not Either/ Or, But Both

"Serving Christ is what matters... preachers shouldn't use the black whip and preach on attendance, contribution, and visiting... a Christian isn't necessarily one who shows up at all services and works harder than anyone else... power through Jesus is the only theme that can revolutionize your life... Let Christ guide you and the fruit of his life will be clearly seen."

All right! I'll buy the whole package! It's Biblical. Jesus is to dwell in us. He is our personal Savior who saves us; and, he can revolutionize our life. But... what then?

Is the peace of God a principle which causes one to war against plain commands of "not forsaking the assembly." (Heb. 10:25)? Does the personal savior "personally authorize a freedom from the following of specific commands in Christianity — which He himself made binding?" (John 14:15). Does "power through Jesus" give us the ability to detach ourselves from the guidance of bishops? (Heb. 13:17) Will "serving Christ" free Christians from giving collectively to carry on God's work? (1 Cor. 16:1,2) Has Jesus "revolutionized" so much that it is no longer a sin to go on a picnic instead of assembling with the saints? (Heb. 10:25,26)

The issue is not the "man" or the "plan." It's not "legalism" or "liberalism." It's not "the spirit working through the word" or "the spirit dwelling in the heart." The decision is not "worship in spirit" or "worship in truth." It's not "either... or." It's "both!"

A "go-to-services-but-leave-Christ-out-on-Monday" won't work. Likewise, a "love-Jesus-but-I-could-care-less-about-church" won't work either!

The issue about what you believe is really this — what next? So you believe following commands is the way of showing Christ in your life. Do you love Him? Is He real? Is He more than a book? Then show it with the warmth of Christ's love!

So you think Jesus is better felt than told? So you feel His power "guides" your life?! Let's see you prove it through your fruits! The fruit may come from Jesus' power, and not from you — so what! The fruit still ought to be evident! (Matt. 7:20) Jesus' "fruit" never calls for less outward dedication! Where does Christian liberty free us from being as dedicated as Paul was, who though an apostle, worked under elders. (Acts

IT CAN BE DONE DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that you can take the BIBLE ONLY, and ESTABLISH and GOVERN a congregation of the Lord's church, WITHOUT ANY OTHER CREED BOOK WRITTEN BY UNINSPIRED MEN? DID you know that if ALL churches would do this that there would "be ONE fold and ONE SHEPHERD" as Jesus PLANNED IT, John 10:16. Do you believe this to be wrong? Jesus PRAYED for this, John 17:20-21; Paul commanded this, 1 Cor. 1:10-13 and to begin with this was true! ALL BELIEVERS "were together and had all things common", Acts 2:44. Jesus WANTS it this way! The churches of Christ TRY REAL HARD to do ALL THINGS JUST AS JESUS WANTS IT DONE!

We give away hundreds of Bibles to try to get people to OBEY GOD! Members of the churches of Christ will DO GOOD UNTO ALL MEN, not just our members, Gal. 6:10. We SERVE the WHOLE community! Is it not reasonable that ALL men can, and should, agree to accept the Bible only?

We have been pleased to find so many people in different churches, who believe that this is the ONLY way and of course thousands each year are turning to the BIBLE ONLY religion. We thank God and take courage that this is true!

20:28), assembled with the saints (Acts 20:7), and believed it was a sin not to do so (Heb. 10:26)?!!

There hasn't been, nor could there ever be enough said about Christ and his power to live in us. Yet, in our zeal to "tell it like it is," let's tell it all. To preach a "revolution from cold facts" is part of it, but it is not all. If Christ is to guide our lives and if he is to "become our Lord in complete surrender," we are not liberated from church attendance, giving, or work. Instead, we, in response to Jesus, become more obligated by the love-principle to be more diligent than a legalist ever could be.

Who works longer and more faithfully — a nurse paid to take care of a little boy because it is her "job," or the mother who cares for her child because she loves him? Love and freedom always create more dedication and responsibility.

Christianity is a faith that works through love. To fail to emphasize both, whether liberal or conservative, is to fail to truly be Christian.

—Bob Barnhill

INTENTION!

Every idea will originate in the mind before it becomes an act. Matt. 15:19.

The odds that man will do the scriptural thing without intention is a billion to one. (then?)

It must be the intention of man to obey the gospel. He must be taught with purpose. His goal must be with the intention of obeying Christ so as to share the blessings of Christ. Eph. 1:3.

It is with intention that a man and woman must get married. The scriptures do not teach that sexual union consummates marriage. Joseph knew Mary as his wife sometime before Jesus was born and they had no sexual relationship until after He was born because He was born of a virgin! Matt. 1:24, 25. If the law of the land did not require a license then with intention to become man and wife, two could do so as Isaac and Rebekah. Gen. 24:67.

Man who does not know what he gives to the Lord, has not given with intention and purpose. Therefore, he has disobeyed 1 Cor. 16:2.

LIKEWISE, it is with intention that a person is baptized into the BODY of Christ! If one does not know into which body he was baptized, his intention and act were wrong and needs to be corrected. If one was not with intention and purpose baptized into the BODY, the church, how does he know what the church is? Can one accidentally be baptized into the church? Can he accidentally give? If in his mind and or intention, he was not aware of the church, thus being baptized into another church, which is not another, can he come into the BODY of Christ by osmosis? Can one transfer from something which does not exist in the eyes of the Lord into the church?

1 Corinthians 12:13, is too plain to be misunderstood. From of old, Nehemiah 6, let us learn who is our brother. Church membership comes after one has obeyed the gospel. Acts 2:47.

—Bill Graddy

FAITH

There are things we cannot understand,
There are things we cannot know,
But God, in His infinite wisdom,
Has seen fit to make it so.

But this we know, as days go by
And the years roll on apace,
We'll learn and know what is best for us
Through faith in His wonderful grace.

—MIONA WILKINSON

Church News

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Faith, Hope, Con't. . .

faith we are justified, Galations 2:16. Man's capacity for such a faith is truly dynamic.

Mankind, throughout all of the ages, has groped and sought for something to believe in. Primitive people, separated from God by sin, put their faith in something tangible such as the wind which blew, the cloud which rained, or the fire which warmed. The early Greeks and Romans with all their worldly wisdom went farther in their search for faith, but they fell far short of God in conceiving of many gods with human attributes. The Hindu religion typifies a further development in its idea of never ending life. Transmigration of the soul attempts to span the gap of eternity with faith in living matter rather than God.

Modern, materialistic, Pseudo-scientific man, has accomplished little in his search for faith. Modern day literature is filled with examples of men who have put their faith in man and his ability to improve life with technological improvements. The eternal is laughed at, winked at, and largely overlooked. What belief in God we find is largely superficial.

It is my feeling that such a concept is damaging to our society, for we live in an age when insecurity prevails. Today we can expect at least 10% of children born to be treated for a mental illness during his or her life. Many of these will be church members, but their illness will be caused not by their faith, but rather by their lack of it.

From the Bible comes faith, a saving faith, true faith. Romans 10:17. It is faith containing all of the characteristics mentioned earlier and more. We receive trust in ourselves, trust in our fellow man, but most significantly, faith in the true and living God. Jesus Christ is, the "author and finisher of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2)

Don't Worry About The Transportation

In the window of a grocery store was a sign: WANTED — A DELIVERY BOY. The first applicant was a strong-looking lad who inquired about the wages, hours, vacation . . . and then asked, "Do you provide a bicycle?" "No," replied the grocer, "Well," said the boy, "I'm not going to carry heavy groceries all over town. I don't want the job unless you provide a bicycle."

Later, a scrubbed-clean teenager walked in and asked for the job. He needed the work to help support his widowed mother, he explained. The grocer asked, "Don't you want to know about the wages, hours and vacation?" "No," said the boy, "I just want the job." "But," questioned the grocer, "don't you want to know if we provide a delivery-bicycle?" "No," said the boy, "I'll deliver them on foot if necessary. Please, may I have the job?"

Then the grocer told him about the boy who demanded a bicycle. "You see," he explained, "we don't have a bicycle, because WE PROVIDE A NEW STATION WAGON FOR MAKING DELIVERIES."

The following article from the Minister's monthly I believe will help us. Please read it with you in mind. Read it prayerfully!!!

Two Sides

Two boys went to gather grapes. One was happy they found grapes. The other was unhappy because the grapes had seed in them.

Two men, being convalescent, were asked how they were. One said, "I am better today." The other said, "I was worse yesterday."

When it rains, one man says, "This will make mud," the other says, "This will lay the dust."

Two boys, examining a bush - one observed that it had a thorn; the other that it had a rose.

Two children, looking through colored glasses - one said, "The world is blue." And the other said, "It is bright."

Two boys, having a bee - one got honey; the other got stung. The first called it a honey bee. The other called it a stinging bee.

"I am glad that I live," says one man. "I'm sorry I must die," says another.

"I am glad," says one, "that it is no worse." "I'm sorry," says another, "that it is no better."

One says, "Our good is mixed with evil." Another says, "Our evil is mixed with good."

"Now to him who . . . is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think . . . be glory" (Ephesians 3:20)

Consider the moral. We ask God for a "bicycle" when He has a "new car" for us. Commit yourself to work for God, but leave the transportation to Him.

Think of the men who have been supreme in imagination . . . the positive thinkers . . . the men in the church who think big. We take shots at them as promoters." "Impractical and unrealistic men," we say. But Paul looks at them and says, "Boys, you've been far outdistanced by the Lord. He is able to do far more than you can ask or think." We ask for a cupful, and the ocean remains. The ability of God towers above our wildest thoughts, reaching away into "the mists of the immeasurable."

Think big! It will still be small compared with God's ability to give and perform. Commitment is the key . . . do you really want the job? Take hold of the task and God will provide the transportation!

—Joe Barnett

Look Into The Mirror

James said, "For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror." There was not anything wrong with looking, but James said, "for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway, forgetteth what manner of man he was."

Paul admonished, "Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves."

There is value in taking a personal inventory of one's life and faith. As one studies the scripture he should make the personal application which will help him overcome his weaknesses and which will strengthen his faith.

The more one looks into the word of God (the mirror), the more he is able to find the solution to his needs, and the more he is able to fortify his life against the devil's efforts to overcome him. God's word is as bread to a hungry soul which seeks after the way of righteousness.

—Carrol C. Trent.