

# Seek The Old Paths

*"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."*

(Jeremiah 6:16)

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## IS ALL OF LIFE WORSHIP?

*Ben F. Vick, Jr.*

**S**ome have the mistaken notion that all of life is worship. One brother has stated,

"We have been fighting a losing battle because we have been proclaiming that Christianity is something 'you are,' but worship is something 'you do.' Nothing could be farther from the truth. If you are a Christian you are worship to God. The matter is not one of **doing** but rather of **being**."

My brother then gives scriptures to support his contention. They are: Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 12:28-29; 13:15-16; I Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17. However, if one would take the time to look at each of these verses, they all, to a verse, deny the very thing our brother affirms. Christianity is both being and doing.

The false premise that all of life is worship would mean that anything that is morally right becomes acceptable worship. The washing of hands, cups and pots would have to be acceptable worship. Yet, Jesus said to the Pharisees of his day, *"Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the com-*

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**Some who are getting so little out of the worship these days are partaking of too much junk that the world has to offer. And because they are not getting anything out of the services, they want to offer us junk.**

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*mandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do"* (Mark 7:8). What about burning incense? Is there anything immoral about doing that? If one likes the sweet aroma in his house, would that not be acceptable worship? If it is acceptable worship at home, why not during the assembly? If all that we do in life is worship, then bring the incense! What about counting beads? Anything immoral about that? Bring them, too. Well, there is nothing morally wrong about a mechanical instrument. I like to

hear the sounds of an organ, a piano, guitar, banjo, violin (fiddle, if you are country), harmonica, etc. Why not bring all of these items into our assemblies? If all of life is worship, then, there are no holds barred. Get the moving van ready. The only things that would not be permissible would be immoral practices.

One brother has a problem finding vertical worship in the New Testament. He thinks that service to fellow man is worship to God. Let's see if we can help our brother solve his problem. The very thing he advocates is what the devil wanted Jesus to do. Matthew tells us, *"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"* (Matt. 4:8-10). The devil wanted Jesus to worship (*proskuneo*) him, but Jesus told the devil to get out of there and then quoted scripture to him, saying, *"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy*

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**IS ALL OF LIFE WORSHIP?...**



*Editorial...*

## THE NEED FOR AN ELDERSHIP IN EVERY CHURCH

Garland M. Robinson

**W**hat is the most pressing need of any congregation? A better meeting place? Better trained Bible teachers? A faithful gospel preacher? Perhaps more money to support more work for the Lord? What if you were able to supply one or all of these? If you could do one thing for the church where you worship, what would it be?

Though these are pressing needs, there is a need far greater than any and all of these: a faithful, godly eldership in every congregation! [Men who are unqualified can never be elders (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11).] With a good eldership these other needs will be taken care of.

Jesus did not intend to leave his church to be a formless, leaderless group of unguided people. God intended the church to be an "ekklesia." His church will be a thoroughly ordered body of people, not a chaotic, self-willed sect. The church of Christ is made up of people who are obedient to God's will.

Elders are the "key" men in the church. Their function is to oversee, superintend, harmonize, and integrate the work of evangelists, teachers and the whole membership. A strong faithful eldership in every congregation is one of the surest ways to stand before the Lord one day and hear him say, "well done thou good and faithful servant." On the other hand, an unqualified eldership is a sure way to fail in God's work and destroy the local congregation.

Why do so few churches have qualified overseers? Several questions must first be answered. How many churches really want elders? How many Christians really want elders? Would the average church's membership tolerate real New Tes-

tament shepherds? It is sad, but many Christians are in such a state that it is doubtful they would tolerate someone watching for their souls. Will you submit your spiritual life to the care and keeping of the pastors?

### ELDERS ARE NOT OPTIONAL

Congregations must realize that elderships are not optional. We do not have the liberty to have elders or not. We do not have the option of forming another system to oversee the flock on a permanent basis (such as the general men's business meeting)! The men's business meetings are attended by the faithful and unfaithful, the novice and experienced, the learned and the unlearned. Such meetings are often characterized by friction, strife and division. They are sometimes dominated by a small minority or sometimes a single individual who can maneuver and manipulate others to vote the way he desires. The work of the Lord is not carried on by popular (majority) vote! Nor is it carried on by minority vote! Nothing will ever work successfully when everyone is in charge yet no one is in charge!

However, in the absence of qualified elders, the arrangement of a general meeting of the men seems only logical. The work of the church must be carried out. Someone must make certain decisions.

### WHY SHOULD EVERY CONGREGATION WANT AND HAVE ELDERS?

Because it is the will of God! Paul said to Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things

that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5). Paul and Barnabas "ordained elders in every church...and commended them to the Lord on whom they believed" (Acts 14:23). No other individual(s) has the obligation or responsibility of these men. A congregation will never be truly organized until the will of God is carried out in this area. The number one reason why every congregation should have elders is because it is the will of God.

### ELDERS HAVE THE OVERSIGHT

Elders have the responsibility of seeing to it that God's will is obeyed. They do not make laws where God made none. They simply carry out the laws God has commanded! God has given them authority to do this.

Elders are to "TAKE HEED" to themselves and to the flock. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). The word "heed" means to "hold to...turn one's attention to..." The Holy Spirit made them overseers and they have the right to turn their attention to every member and see to it that what they are doing is pleasing unto the Lord.

They are to "TEND" the flock. In I Peter 5:1-3 we read, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." The word "tend" or "feed" means "to shepherd, to nourish, promote the interest of, direct, superintend, to rule."

Elders have the "RULE" over the congregation. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your

souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief" (Heb. 13:17). "Rule" means "to go before, to be a leader, to rule, command, to have authority over, leading in respect to influence, controlling in counsel." They must give the congregation organization and direction. They must communicate with them, evaluate the work, and always be alert for ways to use every member to the fullest of his ability.

Elders have the duty of keeping the church "PURE." In doing so, they teach the word of God (I Tim. 3:2). They are able by sound doctrine to "convict the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9). "Convict" means to "bring to light, expose, demonstrate, convince, reprove, and correct those who speak against or contradict the truth." They are to "warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all" (I Thess. 5:14). They take the lead in church discipline (II Thess. 3:6).

Though they are responsible for each of the souls entrusted to their

care and have authority from God in carrying out their task, they are not to be lords over God's heritage (I Peter 5:3). This means to rule with an iron hand or dictatorial spirit. They are not to love the pre-eminence as Diotrephes (III John 9). Instead, they are to be gentle and not self-willed.

### WHAT WILL FAITHFUL ELDERS DO?

*They will be diligent students of the Bible.* It's hard to be a coach if you do not know the rules of the game. Therefore, elders will keep themselves informed of false doctrines and take seriously their responsibility to guard the church.

*They will know the needs of the membership* and strive to meet those needs according to the Word.

*They will know the Bible teachers and be assured of their soundness and faithfulness.* This will also involve making sure the literature used is true to the Bible.

*They are men who will hold fast the faithful word* and be able "by

*sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince [convict] the gainsayers"* (Titus 1:9). They are men who have the courage and willingness to meet error head on. They will inoculate the membership against the errors that run rampant both in and out of the church!

*They will close their pulpits to false teachers.* When there are no elders, it's difficult to stop false teachers. Some will have objections of one sort or another. People will become upset and division occurs. With elders, they can put a stop to it and the faithful will stand behind them. Some may voice objection but soon see they cannot have their way.

*They will uphold the hands of those who preach the word.* This is extremely important! They will let the congregation know what was preached is the will of God and if anyone has an objection, see the eldership about it, not the preacher.

*They will take the church out of the secular education, entertainment and recreation business.* There is no Bible authority for the church support of such things. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). The home supplies these needs.

*They will make every effort to restore the church to her ancient simplicity and purity as authorized by the scriptures.* An appeal to the "old paths" will be foremost in their minds.

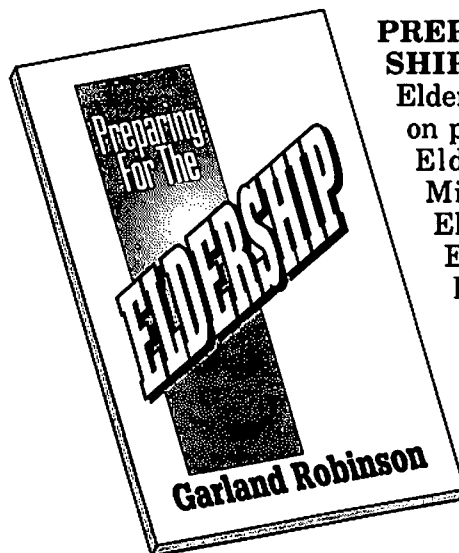
*They will see to it that God's word is obeyed in all things.* They will show the way by example.

### CONCLUSION

If you work under good elders, be thankful and hold up their hands. Never be a worry to them. Pray for them.

If you do not have elders where you worship, let it be foremost in your mind that as soon as there are qualified men, they will be appointed. Working under faithful men will stir your soul unto a greater zeal for the Lord. Work for the day when there will be godly elders, not only among you, but in every congregation of the Lord's church!

## NEW BOOK AVAILABLE



**PREPARING FOR THE ELDERSHIP** includes: The Need For An Eldership in Every Church (editorial on pages 2-3), the Terms applied to Elders, The Number of Elders, Misconceptions Concerning the Eldership, How One is "Made" an Elder, How One is "Unmade" an Elder, Other Important Matters, Qualifications, Duties of Elders to the Congregation and Duties of the Congregation to the Elders. This material was studied in a men's class at East Corinth and bound in book form (48 pages) at the suggestion of the elders.

Its author is **Garland Robinson**. Copies are \$2 each plus 75 cents postage for 1-2 copies, \$1.50 for 3-10 copies, \$2 for 11-20 copies. Write checks to Garland Robinson and send to 304 Ripley St., Corinth, MS 38834.

## IS ALL OF LIFE WORSHIP?...

(Continued from page 1)

God, and him only shalt thou serve." We are not to worship (*proskuneo*) man. Cornelius tried it, but Peter corrected him. The word "only" means solely, i.e., no one else. Evidently, there is a difference in "worship" and "service" or our Lord would not have used two different words. They are different in the English, as well as in the Greek.

This same brother says,

"What is the primary way in our culture that we show appreciation publicly? Applause. It says to the recipients, 'We truly appreciate what you have done, and we want to publicly recognize you and honor you'."

If I understand the brother correctly, he is saying that worship, to some extent, is praising each other. Is this what the Bible teaches?

There is certainly a need to give honor to whom honor is due (Rom. 13:7); however, one would be hard pressed to show that to do so is worship to God. This brother did not prove it. Come now, and let us reason together on this matter.

In the Revelation we have this scene: "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God" (Rev. 22:8-9). The word "worship" is translated from a Greek word (*proskuneo*), which means "...to kiss, (like a dog licking his master's hand); to fawn or crouch to, i.e. (literally or figura-

tively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore):..." When John had fallen and had begun to worship this angel, he was told, "See thou do it not...." But this good brother is advocating that we worship (praise) our brethren. But if an angel, who is a little higher than man, prohibited an inspired apostle from worshiping him, how could it be acceptable to God for us common folk to worship each other? It sounds to me like some want to turn worship services into pep rallies. If clapping is acceptable in worship, why not rolling in the aisles or barking at the moon? God is not the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33).

Brother Prewitte Copeland, former principal and president of Georgia Christian School (we affectionately called him "brother 'C'"), used to tell us that you get out of something what you put into it. That's exactly right. Some get little or nothing from the worship services because they put nothing into it.

When I was a boy I used to sell newspapers in the afternoon in Valdosta, Georgia. Often, after I had finished selling my papers, I would stop at one of the drug stores (when they used to have soda fountains) and buy myself a large ice cream soda. If I had any change left over, I might buy me some candy to munch on as I walked home. Do you know that by the time I arrived home for supper, I just did not have much of an appetite? The good, nutritious food that mother had prepared did not appeal to me. Consequently, I did not get much out of the meal. Some who are getting so little out of the worship these days are partaking of too much junk that the world has to offer. And because they are not getting anything out of the services, they want to offer us junk. But the angel said, "See thou do it not....worship God" (Rev. 22:9).

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# A DANGEROUS TREND IN WORSHIP

Ken Baird

A family visits a worship service at the invitation of one of our members. When asked for their opinion, their response is "Frankly, I was bored." It happens again and again and we begin to worry.

A thorough investigation reveals at least two factors that could explain the difficulty we are having attracting new people:

1. To a large extent, the present generation has been raised on a diet of television where only perfection is allowed in the finished product. Mistakes and faux pas are edited out. The speaker is dynamic and is every bit as important as the message he delivers. He is selected on the basis of his charisma and he is retained on the basis of the audience he attracts.

2. The theme of today's world is entertainment. It may be sports, movies, TV, Nintendo, or it may take some other form. But give today's generation a pause in their entertainment and they are immediately bored.

Our conclusion is that we must make our worship more entertaining. We must be more conscious of the charisma and attracting power of our preachers. After all, we can't teach people if we bore them. And so the old proverbial end justifies the means.

What's wrong with such an approach?

1. It's based on a complete misunderstanding of the purpose of worship. Worship is first and foremost to give something back to God in response to what He's

given to us. An example is "We love because He first loved us" (I John 4:19).

2. Our problem is not that we have provided a boring worship service. The solution is not that we must entertain this generation in order to interest them in God.

3. Our problem is that we haven't adequately taught what true worship is. We haven't instilled in our people such a love for God and Jesus that they will just naturally respond to Them from that love. And that love and that response, directed to God, and not to anyone else, will be so great that others will see that we have been with Jesus. To be bored with worship or to be concerned because someone else is bored with worship, is to not understand worship and may mean that we haven't really worshipped.

**May we not hesitate to be different when we know we are right.**

### CONTRIBUTORS

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FROM TIME TO TIME, we will mention the availability of books and periodicals that we believe will be of interest to our readers in the cause of truth (Such as the book on page 3). We will not knowingly mention any item that we cannot endorse.

-Editor

# IS EVERYTHING A CHRISTIAN DOES WORSHIP?

*Holger Neubauer*

**I**n the push to accept mechanical instruments of music in the worship service, some have advocated the idea that everything a Christian does in his life is worship to God. If this is true, then there would be no such things as specific "acts of worship" that each individual Christian is obligated to fulfill in the assembly. If everything a Christian did were "worship" then there is no need to concern ourselves with what happens in the public assemblies of the church since visiting or eating a common meal would be as much worship to God as partaking of the Lord's Supper.

The definition of "worship" is to "adore" and in ancient times royalties would be worshipped by the kissing of their hands and kneeling. However, the scriptures are the only determinative standard to discover how the word is used.

In Acts 24 Tertullus, the paid prosecuting attorney for the Jews, brought accusation against the apostle Paul for division among the Jewish people. Paul, in defending himself before the governor, Felix, testified that he had not been found disputing in the temple, neither raising up the people in the synagogues nor in the city (Acts 24:12). Yet in the previous verse we find a point germane to our discussion. Paul said, "that there are yet twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship" (Acts 24:11). Paul did not have the idea that everything he did was worship, for he did not say "he went worshipping to Jerusalem," but he went, "to Jerusalem to worship." Obviously a time and a setting are implied in going somewhere to do anything!

In I Corinthians 14:25, reference is made to man who is convicted of his own sin in the assembly of the church. He then falls down on his face "to worship." Here, a specific act of worship is mentioned. Colossians 2:18 refers to the doctrine of "worshipping angels." Hebrews 11:21 points out that Jacob, "worshiped, leaning upon the top of his staff." The beasts of Revelation 19:4, fell down and "worshipped God." All these verses point to a specific act of devotion paid to God.

Everything a Christian does is indeed service to God, but everything a Christian does is not worship. Jesus demanded that all men worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). When Christians gather on the first day of the week to hearken to His word (II Tim. 4:2-4), pray (I Tim. 2:8), partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7), contribute (I Cor. 16:1-2), sing (Eph. 5:19), while lifting their hearts to God in all these acts, each Christian worships God in spirit and in truth.

Since the Bible demands authority for all that we do (Col. 3:17), we must continually contend for worship to remain as God willed it, "in spirit and in truth."

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# FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

S. C. Kinningham

*Every Christian may find himself alone at times in the midst of people who do not respect the law of God and the church he built. God needs somebody to make him known there, and the Christian is brought into the kingdom for this purpose.*

**W**hen Israel faced one of the greatest crises in the history of that nation and the fate of the entire people rested in the hands of a single individual, Esther could be depended on to render the service needed. All her people faced extinction. She alone was in a position to save them. Her uncle said, "*Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*" By the providence of God she had been put into that position for this special service. She did not fail God and his people. She stood virtually alone in the midst of a people who did not serve Jehovah, but she was loyal to God and he stood with her.

When God needed somebody in Egypt to make him known there and to save his people in that day, he brought Joseph, a seventeen year old boy, into the land for that purpose. Joseph made himself useable by being faithful to God and keeping himself pure. When tempted to commit the evils that were common around him, he said, "*How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*" He stood alone among a people who did not serve Jehovah, but was true to him, and God stood with him. He could be counted on to render the service that he was put into that position to render.

When God needed somebody in Babylon to teach the greatest monarch on earth in his day about God, his omniscience and omnipotence, and that he rules over all the kingdoms of the

earth, he brought Daniel there for that purpose. He was a mere boy and placed under the orders of a king who did not serve Jehovah, but he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself and was faithful to God. Because of his strong faith and great courage, God stood with him and could depend on him to do what he was brought into that kingdom to do.

Every man, woman, boy, and girl in the kingdom of God today is brought into it for a purpose. But not every girl proves to be an Esther, nor every boy a Joseph or a Daniel. Not everyone can be depended on to stand with God and for God in times of a crisis as these characters did. Not everyone makes himself useable in God's service by keeping himself from defilement as these did. Every Christian may find himself alone at times in the midst of people who do not respect the law of God and the church he built. God needs somebody to make him known there, and the Christian is brought into the kingdom for this purpose.

Every Christian lives in a world where God's standard of morality, modesty and uprightness is virtually unknown and the standards of the world prevail. God needs somebody in such a place to make known his standards in his ways. The Christian is brought into the kingdom for such a time as this. Can he depend on you in every crisis?

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# SHOULD WE OFFER AN INVITATION IN OUR ASSEMBLIES?

Glenn Colley

Recently a brother visited our worship and intently wanted to speak with me after the assembly was dismissed. Referring to my sermon, and the fact that I closed by explaining how a person becomes a Christian and offering an invitation to whoever wanted to be baptized that night, he said, "I haven't heard the invitation offered in several months."

In the last couple of years I have been questioned more than once about "offering the invitation" at every worship assembly. Apparently some preachers feel it is more "in vogue" with the modern liberal movement to set aside any traditions without serious concern for their validity and usefulness. The "invitation song" is a case in point.

During their assemblies, Christians for many years have had the practice (tradition if you please), of offering assistance to anyone who wants to obey the Gospel or who wants the prayers of brothers and sisters. Typically, this is done with a verbal encouragement and a thoughtful song that is sung while standing to make acceptance of the offer as comfortable as possible. Is this a practice which has seen it's time and needs removing? I believe not.

Consider the fact that a person CANNOT be baptized into Christ without the assistance of another (Acts 8:38). At some point the person desiring to obey Christ MUST ask for assistance.

Consider the fact that a person CANNOT be baptized into

Christ without hearing the plan of salvation (Acts 11:48).

Consider that Christians are eager for others to come to Christ, and therefore eager to offer whatever assistance is needed—anytime (Matt. 28:18; James 5:19,20).

Consider that very often something will be said in the sermon which triggers serious contemplation in the heart of the lost individual. That person may never be closer to making things right with God than he is right now.

Consider that in some churches (perhaps most), non-Christian visitors are present for every worship assembly.

Consider that encouragement to obey is often necessary for a person to make the needed decision. When better to encourage this lost soul than when all the Christians are together in one assembly singing, praying, and studying? By failing to encourage, we run the serious risk that the individual in question may die that very night. If he does, the missed opportunity to encourage and offer assistance will forever linger as a "what if."

Consider how many, through the years, and even today, are responding to such invitations.

Consider that all Christians need to be evangelistic and "soul-conscious" about converting the lost. The repetition of the plan of salvation will help keep them familiar with the passages of scripture relative to teaching a sinner how to be in Christ.

Now, consider the possible reasons why men should cease this good practice. I frankly can't think of one—and until I do, I intend to continue concluding my sermons with a Biblical explanation of how a person obtains forgiveness, whether in Christ or out, and offer the assistance and love of all the Christians in the assembly.

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## SHALL WE DEAL WITH THE ISSUES?

Paul Wilmoth

**T**here are those among us today who advocate that we should do whatever it takes to maintain peace. They suggest that we should not deal with controversial issues, that we should maintain a positive approach and never be guilty of being negative. These same people often reject sound, solid gospel preachers, because someone has criticized them or falsely accused them of one thing or another. Such people as this would certainly not want either Christ or the apostle Paul to preach from their pulpits because they were constantly engaged in controversy. The life of Christ, as pictured by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, is a picture of a man who goes from one confrontation to another. His life was never free from controversy nor false accusations.

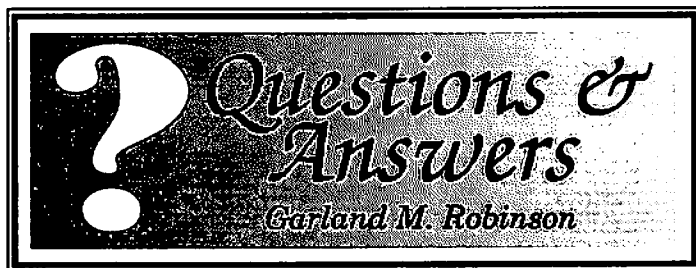
Certainly all of us wish to be well thought of and well spoken of; but, at the same time, we must never sacrifice the soundness and strictness of God's glorious message. Jesus stated his purpose in Matt. 10:34-36: *"Think not that I am come to bring peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."* Jesus was well aware that his message would divide families and friends.

Remember also that Jesus had taught in the great Sermon on the Mount that happi-

ness comes from being reproached and persecuted for his sake. *"Blessed (happy) are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"* (Matt. 5:10-12). He also said, *"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the son of man's sake. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy"* (Luke 6:22-23). He also warns us about being of such a nature and disposition that all men speak well of us. *"Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets"* (Luke 6:26).

Brethren, we are living in an age when soundness and strictness are not popular. We are living in an age when more and more are deserting the "Old Jerusalem Gospel" for after dinner speeches aimed at winning friends and influencing people. That kind of speech will win friends and influence people; but, it will not save a single soul. Paul said THE Gospel is God's power to save souls. So, brother, preach on! And don't worry about winning any popularity contests!

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## DOES FORGIVENESS TAKE AWAY AN UNSCRIPTURAL DIVORCE SO THAT ONE IS FREE TO REMARRY?

When one truly believes in Christ (John 8:24; Heb. 11:6), repents of sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38), confesses faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37) and is baptized (immersed) in water (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16), he is forgiven of all his sins and becomes a child of God. Acts 2:41 says, *"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."* Some who were converted at Corinth had been living in fornication, adultery and homosexuality. They had been thieves, drunkards and idolaters. *"...But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"* (I Cor. 6:11). They obtained forgiveness of all their sins.

When sins are forgiven, it does not give one a license to go back and commit that sin again. If I am forgiven of stealing, I am not allowed to steal again. If I am forgiven of drinking, I am not allowed to drink again. If I am forgiven of idolatry, I am not allowed to continue bowing down to idols. If I am forgiven of homosexuality (sodomy), I cannot get involved in another homosexual relationship. Likewise, if I am forgiven of adultery, I cannot contract another adulterous union. Yes, I can be forgiven of whatever sin I have committed but I cannot return to that sin again.

Jesus gave his law regarding divorce and remarriage in Matthew 19:9, *"...Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."* The only way you can marry again after a divorce is if you put away (divorce) your spouse because of their fornication. If you did, you are free to form another marriage union (providing you marry someone who also has a right to marry). If you did not, you are not free to form another marriage union and must therefore remain single (Matt. 19:9-12; I Cor. 7:10-11).

Marriage is a privilege allowed by God. *"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge"* (Heb. 13:4). When God's law is violated concerning divorce, he no longer allows one to form another marriage. The first and foremost priority is to obey God (Matt. 6:33). Solomon wrote, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man"* (Eccl. 12:13).



"Please send **STOP** to the addresses enclosed. Two or three are studying from the NIV. I want them to get all the help they can get to get out of that habit. I know you and the brethren there are doing a great job with the printed

word and I am glad and pray for your efforts continually. My wife and I get discouraged visiting so-called churches of Christ. They are either teaching from some new version, have papers out for their people to see and read of Dr. Dobson, ACU and the like. I can't leave without saying something against it. We have been able to turn some back to the old paths. We hope you don't faint in doing good"...*Morgan City, LA*. "I picked up a copy of your paper at the E.T.S.O.P. lectureship this spring and was impressed with the contents. I subsequently asked to be on your mailing list and I am glad because each issue has been sound and timely. After reading the piece by brother Rod Rutherford in the May 1993 (The Ostrich Complex), I couldn't get it out of my mind. I have been writing along the same lines for a while and decided to incorporate some of his ideas with mine"...*Cheyenne, WY*. "We appreciate the fine articles you print each month in **STOP**. You are in our prayers daily. May God continue to bless all lovers of the truth"...*Bentonville, AR*. "The brethren here enjoy receiving your publication each month. You are doing a fine work and may God bless you. It truly seems that perilous times are here for God's church. It appears that all it takes for preachers to be accepted by congregations is just claim to be a member of the church, and little attention is paid as to what he believes and preaches"...*Palestine, AR*.

Seek The Old Paths is a publication of the East Corinth Church of Christ and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed free upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12.

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