



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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AFFECTIONS

James E. Rogers

***Preachers who hold their finger to the wind
before deciding what to preach lest they upset members of the congregation
need to read 3 John 9, John 12:42-43, 2 Tim. 4:2***

Paul admonished, *“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection (mind, ASV) on things above, not on things on the earth”* (Col. 3:1,2). Jesus says, *“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal”* (Matt. 6:19-20). It is certainly true that *“where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Matt. 6:21).

Everyone has his affections set on something. The affections of the Christian are fixed on things that are different from those of the world. This seems strange to those in the world and they *“think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot”* (1 Peter 4:4). Worldly affections will bring about the loss of one’s soul.

Affections have been placed on many things in times past. In Noah’s day, the love of the world was rampant (Gen. 6-10; Matt. 24:38,39). In Abraham’s day, homosexuality was the “norm” for many (Gen. 19). In our day, affections are placed on babies, dogs, clothes, character and any number of other things. A daily perusal of the newspaper will reveal the things

on which people have placed their affections.

The Bible sets some boundaries for our affections. If we will respect the teaching of the Bible and thus enjoy life here and hereafter, we will be sensitive to those boundaries as we make our decisions on a daily basis. Let us observe these Bible boundaries.

DO NOT SET YOUR AFFECTIONS ON:

1. **Self Too Highly.** Paul wrote to those in Rome, *“to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think”* (Rom. 12:3). Paul stated that in the last days *“men shall be lovers of self...haughty...”* (2 Tim. 3:2). Jesus said, *“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me”* (Matt. 16:24). It is very easy for us to put our affection on ourselves in an unjust way and thus miss the rewards of the Christ.

2. **Sinful Pleasures.** The younger son had his affections on the sinful pleasures of the world when he left home (Luke 15:11-32). It took a pig-pen experience and some real soul-searching for him to realize he had missed the real treasures back home. Too many people underesti-

mate the power of pleasure. Jesus taught that when seed was sown, *“that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of [this] life, and bring no fruit to perfection”* (Luke 8:14). The Galatians were warned not to go back to the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). Paul stressed where sinful pleasures will lead in Romans 1:18-32. We all need the good sense exhibited by Moses who chose *“...rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season”* (Heb. 11:25).

3. **The World.** If one gets everything the world has to offer, all he will have is *“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life”* (1 John 2:16). Paul underscores the worldly affections in 2 Timothy 3:1-8. I am sure that some of the saddest words ever written by Paul were these: *“for Demas forsook me, having loved this present world”* (2 Tim. 4:10). The world will rob us of those things that really are good and important under the guise of giving us something better. May we be wise enough to see through the glitter and strong enough to refuse that which cannot help, but only hurt. Let us know better and do

(Continued on page 38)

Affections...



Editorial...

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT DEATH

Garland M. Robinson

Nothing is more common to life than death. Men and women, boys and girls have been dying from the time God “...formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7).

From that earliest moment of life, God informed man of death. “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt surely die**” (Gen. 2:15-17).

Perhaps nothing in all of life has preoccupied the mind of man more than death. Entire lifetimes have been spent in pursuit of the non-existent “fountain of youth.” Some have spent their fortune in the futile effort to find it. Scientists and doctors continue to search relentlessly for the cure of every disease so life might be sustained indefinitely. But, such will never be found for “...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Oh, that such great pain and effort would be expended in the quest to escape the consequences of spiritual death! Why don’t men search for eternal life with God? Sadly, they want the things of the world, not the things of God!

FOUR TYPES OF DEATH

Physical death — all pass this way. “...It is appointed unto men once to die...” (Heb. 9:27). Physical death occurs when the spirit leaves the body. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26). Man’s spirit is what makes the body of flesh alive. Our physical body is only a tabernacle, a tent, which houses our soul and gives it existence on this earth.

As faithful Christians “...we know

that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life” (2 Cor. 5:1-4).

Spiritual death — separation from God — “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). Though one is alive physically, he may be dead spiritually. This fact eludes so many as they continue to gratify every lust of the flesh. In First Timothy 5:6 we read, “*But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.*” The father of the prodigal son said, “*For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found*” (Luke 15:24,32). Ephesians 2:12 speaks of those spiritually dead saying they are “...without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

The second death, hell. “*And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death*” (Rev. 20:14). When this life is over, those who have lived in sin and pleasure will experience the second death — hell fire, eternal damnation. Revelation 21:8 gives a glimpse of some who will experience this second death. “*But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*”

You can live so as to avoid the second death. It has no power over those who overcome a life of sin and rebellion. “...*He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death*” (Rev. 2:11).

Dead unto sin. One can put to death the “old man of sin” and be alive unto God. “*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Rom. 6:11). “*For he that is dead is freed from sin*” (Rom. 6:7). When we die to sin we do not serve it any longer. We do not give ourselves over to it. We give ourselves to God, not sin (Rom. 6:12-16). This occurs when we obey the gospel by **believing** (John 8:24), **repenting** (Acts 2:38), **confessing** (Rom. 10:9-10), and being **baptized** (Rom. 6:3-6). “*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness*” (Rom. 6:18).

Each of these four types of death contemplate a separation. In physical death the body is separated from the spirit. In spiritual death the spirit is separated from God. In the second death there is eternal separation from God. In dying unto sin there is a separation from the practice of sin.

THE POWER OF DEATH IS PROFOUND

Death is perhaps the most powerful force on earth. It is man’s common enemy. It is feared by both young and old. It is so vast that none can escape it. God told Adam and Eve, “*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*” (Gen. 3:19). Solomon proclaimed, “*For the living know that they shall die...*” (Eccl. 9:5). Elihu rightly said, “*All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust*” (Job 34:15). Moses reported, “*The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away*” (Psalm 90:10). David declared, “*Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away*” (Psalm 144:4). “*What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave*” (Psalm 89:48). “*But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he*” (Job 14:10)? There is “*a time to be born, and a time to die...*” (Eccl. 3:2).

Many have acknowledged death terminating their existence on this earth. When Joshua was old and well

stricken in age he said, “*And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth...*” (Josh. 23:14). Of the second king of Israel we read, “*Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man*” (1 Kings 2:1-2). Job said, “*For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living*” (Job 30:23). Solomon said, “*All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again*” (Eccl. 3:20). “*There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death...*” (Eccl. 8:8). “*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it...because man goeth to his*

long home, and the mourners go about the streets” (Eccl. 12:7,5).

Jesus made it plain that one can die at any moment. There is no “set time” for me or you to die. Some people say everyone has a “time to die” and if it’s not your time, you will not die, or if it is your time, you cannot keep from dying. This statement is not true! Notice John 7:6 where Jesus said, “*...My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.*” There was a “specific time” for Jesus to die, but we can die at any time. We can potentially shorten or lengthen our life depending on the way we live.

For the most part, people act as if they will never die. People go about their normal routine every day. All may say the words, “I know I am going to die,” but so few live as if it

will be today or tomorrow. However, all must pass through the valley of the shadow of death. “*For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again*” (2 Sam. 14:14).

Man is like a great icicle which the sun of time continually thaws. Once we pass through death’s door, we will never see this world again — there’s no coming back. All the accomplishments attained in this life will be to no avail. It does not matter whether you were a scientist or a bum, president of the USA or PTA, all that matters is the record of your life. No more chances will be given. Will your life be found in faithful obedience or shameful disgrace?

Elder's COLUMN

WHEN MY BIBLE STAYS HOME

Roger D. Campbell

All who have lived any length of time has had the experience of leaving home without something they intended to take along. We forget things. We do not do it on purpose. It just happens. Keys get left behind and locked inside the house. We go to the store to exchange something only to find out when we get there we left it at home. Knowing my own forgetful habit now for many years, I’ve had the practice of putting the item(s) I want to take with me on the floor in front of the door so I can’t miss it when I leave. As my wife can testify, this is still no guarantee that I’ll not go off without it, but this practice considerably increases the odds that I will remember what I wanted to take along.

Have you ever had the experience of rushing off to the services of the church and in the process forgot your Bible? Me, too. There you have it — the confession of a preacher! Yes, I, too have gone off without my sword. Frustrating? Yes. Embarrassing? Yes. But, it can happen to any of us. Forgetting things is a part of life.

In this writing, though, we’re not speaking of those Christians that always intend to bring their Bible to class or worship, but on a rare occasion forget it and leave it at home. We also are not speaking of those who had plans to return home and take care of some matters, and would

undoubtedly have picked up their Bible for services, but time got away from them and they went directly to the church building without going home. In such a rare case, they came to services without a Bible.

If you are a member of God’s family that faithfully brings your Bible to the church’s public meetings, then good for you. You have developed a wonderful habit. Keep it up as long as you are alive and physically able to do so. On the other hand, if you are a child of God that rarely, if ever, brings your Bible to the assemblies of God’s people, then there are some matters which you really need to seriously consider.

When my Bible stays at home, *it usually becomes a dusty Bible*. Bibles that do not get transported to services often remain unopened at home. They collect dust due to lack of use. Is that not a tragic commentary on a child of God that is supposed to desire the word just like a newborn babe desires milk (1 Peter 2:2)?

When my Bible stays at home, *I make an impression on truth-seeking visitors*. What kind of impression? For sure, not a good one. I grew up in a denominational group of about sixty people. On an average Sunday, maybe three or four people brought their Bible to services. It really got my attention when I visited the

services of the church of the Christ for the first time and noticed that so many brought their Bible to services. I have learned through the years, however, that it is common for members of the church not to carry their Bible with them to Bible class or worship. I have taught many Wednesday night Bible classes for years when the number of people that failed to bring their Bible to class just about matched those that did. Parents, are you listening?

When my Bible stays at home, *I am not setting the kind of example that I need to set for others*. Many things that we do or say in life can be contagious. I believe that leaving our Bible at home is one of those actions that can have a snowball effect. In the same way, bringing our Bible to services may just be the example or encouragement that someone else needed. We know this: the Lord wants us to be a pattern of good works (1 Peter 2:12). He wants us to let our light shine before others (Matt. 5:16). Making no effort to bring my Bible to services (which, in effect, is the same as purposely leaving it at home) will set a model for others. Who wants to be known as the brother or sister that set the trend for the entire membership of the congregation to stop bringing their Bible to services?!

When my Bible stays at home, *then*

any effort on my part to encourage others to bring their Bible to class or worship assemblies is nothing more than a bunch of vain words. How dare I step into a Bible class to teach it one day of the week, but never tote my Bible to services at any other time. Do you reckon that children, even small ones, pick up on such hypocrisy? Of course they do. Parents, how can we convince our children they need to bring their Bible to services when we do not do it ourselves? It is good for one to say, "Yes, bringing our Bible to services is the right thing to do," but such an admission has no punch to it until the talker actually does what he/she claims is a beneficial act. Let's bring our Bible!

When my Bible stays at home, *Satan is happy*. He knows the power of God's word to save souls (Rom. 1:16). That is why he tries to take it out of the heart of those that hear its message — lest they believe and be saved (Luke 8:12). Those who are present in Bible class without their Bible often have wandering minds and wandering eyes. When they do not have their Bible, while others are reading along, they have free time on their hands. That sometimes leads to talking or other disruptive behavior. We understand that having a Bible sitting on your lap is no guarantee that you'll be an attentive participant in the lesson, but it sure is helpful in that regard.

When my Bible stays at home, *I cannot get the fullest benefit out of a Bible lesson*. Sure, there are pew Bibles you can use while in the auditorium, and there

are Bibles in our classrooms, but using them is not the same as using your own personal Bible. Any serious student of the Bible knows this. And, yes, it is true that I can learn a lot without opening the Bible, but one gets the maximum benefit out of a lesson by studying along, not simply in a Bible, but in your own Bible. Getting the maximum benefit out of a Bible lesson is our objective, right?

When the local church of which I am a member is meeting, and that meeting involves a study of the Scriptures, then my Bible ought to stay at home. Say what? That is right. My Bible ought to stay at home on such occasions, but only if I, too, am forced to stay home due to circumstances beyond my control. That should be the outlook of every child of God. Moms that are hand-tied taking care of little ones during services may not always find it convenient to use their Bible. Who has the ability to do that, right moms? This would be a clear exception to what we are convinced is the best policy.

In the days of Ezra, the Jews came together in Jerusalem and told that faithful scribe of God to "bring the book" of God's law (Neh. 8:1). Sounds like a great idea, would you not agree? Honestly, it does not take much effort. A Bible is not that heavy to carry. If you have not been doing so, why not resolve to put forth that little effort and Bring the Book?

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WE ALL HAVE A PART IN PRAYER

Our prayers are directed to God the Father. "When ye pray, say, *Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name*" (Luke 11:2). God wants us to pray and never give up. "And he spake a parable unto them [to this end], *that men ought always to pray, and not to faint*" (Luke 18:1). Therefore we are to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17), "continuing instant in prayer" (Rom. 12:12; cf. Acts 2:42). We pray "with the spirit, and...with the understanding" (1 Cor. 14:15). We do not pray to be seen of men (Matt. 6:5-6). Prayer is powerful for "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16; cf. Acts 8:24). The whole church prays. "Prayer was made without ceasing of the church" (Acts 12:5). Paul asked brethren to pray for him. "...Strive together with me in [your] prayers to God for me" (Rom. 15:30; cf. 2 Cor. 1:11; 1 Thess. 5:25). Paul prayed for the brethren saying he ceased "not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers" (Eph. 1:16; Rom. 1:9; Col. 1:3,9). We pray when afflicted (James 5:13). We pray for the sick (James 5:14-15). We pray for our enemies and those who persecute us (Matt. 5:44). We pray earnestly and sincerely, not with vain repetitions (Matt. 6:7). We pray for more laborers/workers in the kingdom/church (Matt. 9:38). We pray with a forgiving heart. "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25).

— Editor, Garland M. Robinson

CONTRIBUTIONS

Romona Allums (in memory of my brother, Jerry Emmons)	\$50
Roger Mason	\$100
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Clyde G. Hunter.....	\$50
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Northcutts Cove C/C, Rock Island, TN	\$100
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Berea C/C, Rock Island, TN	\$100
Vernon Waller	\$12
Anonymous	\$25
Anonymous	\$80
Dorothy Barnes.....	\$10
Neely's Bend C/C, Madison, TN.....	\$100
Bradford C/C, Bradford, TN.....	\$100
Jackson St. C/C, Alexandria, LA.....	\$100
Gregory Rd C/C, Columbus, MS.....	\$100
Del Brantley.....	\$50
Anonymous	\$20
Jean Ware.....	\$30
Jean Ware.....	\$30
Ray Tenpenny	\$50
Charlie Rector.....	\$50
Anonymous	\$100
L. C. Bingham	\$25
Carlena Nabors.....	\$25
Robert D. Allen.....	\$20
Arlene H. Allen (in memory of Charlotte Wiggins)	\$75
Anonymous	\$70
John & Brenda Manz	\$50
Del Brantley.....	\$50
Tiftonia C/C, Chattanooga, TN	\$100
Velma Scott	\$10
William (Ned) Hicks.....	\$20
Anonymous	\$115
Beginning Balance	\$10,132.73
Contributions.....	\$2,162.00
Debits	
Postage	\$1,910.66
Supplies.....	\$103.60
Ending Balance	\$10,280.47

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LITURGY IN WORSHIP

Rusty Stark

What? Calling for a liturgy? This can't be right. When we think of liturgy, we think of rites and ceremonies. We think of word-for-word recitation of certain prayers and verses. We think of a leader saying something and the congregation responding in unison with prescribed words. Obviously, this is not the kind of liturgy we are calling for.

Consider what the word 'liturgy' means: Liturgy is the customary public worship done by a specific religious group, according to its particular traditions.

Much of modern religion runs from all that is liturgy, scorns all traditions, and mocks anything that is old-time and familiar. In many modern worship services, you have no idea what is coming next or what new idea someone is going to try to implement today. These groups promote themselves in their advertising with claims of non-traditional worship. They use expressions such as: **'We're Not Your Grandmother's Church,' 'We're a Church that Breaks the Mold,' 'Prepare to be Surprised,' 'A Different Way to do Church,' 'We are a Church without Rules!'**

All of this is part of a larger trend that panders to the modern dislike of 'Church.' Since religious groups are trending downwards, it seems evident that people don't like 'Church.' So the popular response is to be as little like 'Church' as possible. This leads to worship that is extreme in avoiding 'liturgy.'

This article calls for liturgy, but not the canned, wrote prayers and responses of Catholicism. The Bible does not authorize sprinkling "holy water," waving incense, etc. for we cannot find these things in the New Testament. However, God authorizes five acts of worship. And, these five acts of worship have been in use for 2,000 years. To do the same things over and over again makes those things customary and traditional.

We do not respect and engage in authorized acts of worship because they are customary and traditional; we respect and engage in these acts of

worship because God authorized them and he expects them. We do not look to custom or traditions of men to determine what we will do in worship. There must be Bible authority for how we worship God. Paul wrote, *"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"* (Col. 3:17).

Just as we do not allow customs and traditions of men to determine our worship practices, we also do not throw away or modify the acts of worship simply because they are customary and traditional.

Since the New Testament is approximately 2,000 years old, those who claim to have something new in worship are clearly admitting that their worship does not come from the New Testament.

Let's make some observations about the five acts of worship.

1. There are only five acts of worship authorized. The acts of worship are outlined in First Corinthians beginning in the 2nd half of chapter 11. 1) *The Lord's supper* was part of the public worship of the church (1 Cor. 11:17-29; Acts 20:7). 2) *Acapella Singing* took place in the public worship (1 Cor. 14:26). 3) *Prayers* were offered in the worship (1 Cor. 14:15-17). 4) *Teaching* was part of the public worship of the church (1 Cor. 14:26; Acts 20:7). 5) *Giving* was also done as an act of worship when they assembled together on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Speaking in tongues and prophesying are also mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14, but according to chapter 13 verses 8-13, those miraculous gifts were done away when the New Testament was completed. Furthermore, even in the first century when these gifts were in practice in the worship assembly, they were only to be done for teaching purposes (see 1 Cor. 14:12,26).

It is not our right to add new acts of worship to those authorized in his word. Instrumental music is not simply an aid to singing. In the Old Testament it was clearly commanded as an act of praising God (Psalm 150; 2

Chron. 29:25). But, it is conspicuously absent from the New Testament worship and therefore cannot be added to the worship God has authorized. (This issue will be explored more in a future article entitled *'A Little Music Please'*).

2. Each of the five acts is independent. There is no authority in Scripture to engage in more than one act of worship at the same time. We have no authority to combine them together. It is true that prayer is part of the Lord's supper (that pattern was set out by Jesus himself). But singing is not part of the Lord's supper, and actually interferes with the focus needed for both singing and for the Lord's supper. When we observe the supper, we need to focus on the cross and the death of Jesus, discerning his body and his blood (1 Cor. 11:24-29). When we sing, we need to focus on the words of the song with meaning and sincerity. It is not possible to combine these acts and do them correctly.

3. All five acts make up the worship assembly on the first day of the week. We may assemble other times for other purposes such as Bible classes, singing services, prayer services, etc. But when we assemble on the first day of the week in the general assembly of the whole congregation (see the words 'come together' in 1 Cor. 11:17,18,20,33,34; 14:23,26), we are to engage in all the acts of worship that are under consideration here.

All of this adds up to a type of liturgy. We don't offer written prayers, and we may not always have the same number of songs or the same order for these five acts of worship. But these things are our custom and tradition because they come from God's word. They are divine tradition, not man-made tradition (cf. 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6; Acts 16:4). They represent his expectations, his revelation as to how we can approach him and praise him and 'give him the glory due unto his name' (Psa. 29:2).

A Little Liturgy, Please

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Affections...

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better than the Devil desires for us.

4. Money. *“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and [into] many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows”* (1 Tim. 6:9-10). We could all put names on this. I have seen people destroy themselves and their families, for money. I have seen people forsake the worship assemblies and thus grow weak spiritually, for money. I have seen people leave the Lord, for money. It was for money that Judas sold the Lord! May we think seriously about the problems caused by the love of money and learn to use money instead of letting it use us.

5. The Love Of Preeminence Or The Praise Of Men. *“Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence”* (3 John 9). Here was a “leader” in the church who ruined himself because of his love for preeminence. I have seen this in action. There are those who must have their names called often or else they become upset. They want the recognition. This spirit has destroyed congregations. Let it get into an eldership and the work of the church is gone. Everything and everyone will have to cater to the individual who thinks like this. Jesus warned of the *“scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and love salutations in the marketplaces and chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts; who devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater condemnation”* (Luke 20:46,47).

Not only will the love of preeminence cause one to be lost, but the love of the praise of men will do likewise. There were some, even among the chief rulers who believed on Jesus, *“...but because of the Pharisees they did not confess [him], lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God”* (John 12:42-43). Preachers who hold their finger to the wind before deciding what to preach lest they upset some members of the congregation need to re-read these

passages. If the Bible teaches anything, it teaches that one must *“be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine”* (2 Tim. 4:2). Let us love men, but not the praise of men. Remember that Jesus said those who do their righteousness “before men, to be seen of them” are paid in full when men speak well of them (Matt. 6:1,2,5,16).

SET YOUR AFFECTIONS ON:

1. God. Let us love him *“with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind”* (Matt. 22:37). When one considers all the things made manifest by the love of God for us, we should be motivated to love God supremely. It is sad that Jesus had to say of some, *“ye have not the love of God in yourselves”* (John 5:42). We cannot, with ink, write the love of God and we cannot, with our feeble minds, fathom the depth of the love of God, but we can with all our whole being love God in return. May Calvary motivate us to love God above all else.

2. The Christ. Paul’s statement is forceful: *“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha”* (1 Cor. 16:22). Some might wonder how they can know if they truly love the Christ. Jesus made it easy to know if we love him. *“If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments”* (John 14:15). Take a look at the commands of the Lord and then take a look at your lifestyle. How do they compare? Are we willing to take this simple test to determine our love for the Christ? May we work hard to bring our lifestyles into compliance with the wishes of the Christ. We shall never regret a single act of obedience to him and to his will.

3. The Bible. *“O how love I thy law! it [is] my meditation all the day”* (Psa. 119:97). This should be the sentiment of every Christian. Paul dealt with some *“who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness”* (1 Thess. 2:12). Paul was certainly blessed in that he could be assured that *“from a babe thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation”* (2 Tim. 3:15). Every child who has been taught to love the Bible can be thankful for such teaching. I appreciate those teachers who teach our young people to love

and obey the Word of God. We must have more who believe unwaveringly that *“All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works”* (2 Tim. 3:16,17). May the Bible always be the book we love best.

4. The Church. The value of the church is seen in the fact that *“...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish”* (Eph. 5:25-27). Certainly, as we love the Christ, we will love his church. When I think that the church is that *“which he purchased with his own blood”* (Acts 20:28) and that it is that to which the saved are added (Acts 2:41,47), I am moved to want to do all I can to promote His church to the world. What attitude do I portray to my family concerning the church? Does my wife and my children know that I love the church of the Lord with all my being? Do those with whom I work know of my love for the church? I trust we all can tell the truth when we sing, “I Love Thy Kingdom Lord.”

5. Brethren. One of the characteristics of saved folks is that they exhibit *“unfeigned love of the brethren”* (1 Peter 1:22). It is the desire, yea, the effort of every faithful child of God to *“let love of the brethren continue”* (Heb. 13:1). As we mingle among those for whom the Lord died, we want to *“be tenderly affectioned one to another”* (Rom. 12:10). What assurance to know that *“he that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him”* (1 John 2:10) and that *“if we love one another, God abideth in us and his love is perfected in us”* (1 John 4:12). I know that some brethren have earned graduate degrees in aggravation and seem to practice their trade well, but I also know that the best people on the face of the earth are my brethren. May God help me to love them more!

6. The Lost. Jesus *“came to seek and to save that which was lost”* (Luke 19:10). *“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son”* (John 3:16). If heaven loved the lost this

much, how can I not love them enough to make an effort to help them learn how to be saved? Why is it so hard to get Christians to talk about salvation on a daily basis with those whom they know? Why must we always have some kind of special effort to do “personal work?” Should not the knowledge of how much God loved us

and how much someone else loved us when they taught us the Gospel motivate us to pass this knowledge on to others? May we see people as lost people and be moved to talk with them about salvation.

Affections are powerful things. Where we have placed our affections may very well determine where we

live in eternity. It is so easy today to become distracted and set our affections where they should not be. The temptation is great, but the assurances from God are sufficient to help us make the proper decisions. May we Remember the Bible boundaries.

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WHAT CAN HAPPEN BECAUSE OF YOU?

In God’s kingdom (the church), good things can happen because of you, or bad things can happen because of you. An example of the good is that of a husband being won to the Lord by his godly wife (1 Peter 3:1-6). Diotrephes is an example of what can happen because of an evil person (3 John 9-11). What can happen because of you?

Because of you, *others may choose God*. Naomi’s influence was so strong that Ruth chose her God (Ruth 1:16-18). Your influence can cause others to choose God. Your influence can cause someone who believes in Jesus to be stronger in the Lord.

Because of you, *the faith of some might be overthrown*. “But shun profane [and] vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some” (2 Tim. 2:16-18). It will be sad indeed, for some to stand in judgment, having possessed saving faith themselves, and yet be guilty of overthrowing the faith of others.

Because of you, *others might be discouraged*. The spies, except Joshua and Caleb, discouraged the people from going into Canaan and conquering it. “But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they [are] stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the

land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, [is] a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it [are] men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, [which come] of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight” (Num. 13:31-33). Our words or our actions may be a discouragement to others.

Because of you, *others can be refreshed*. “For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother” (Philemon 7). In a world that beats people down, what a blessing it is to be refreshed by brethren who truly love and care.

To be saved, you must **Hear the Gospel** of Christ (Rom. 10:17), **Believe in Jesus** as the Son of the living God (Mark 16:16), **Repent of the sins** in your life (Acts 2:38), **Confess Jesus** as Lord (Rom. 10:9,10), and be **Baptized for remission of sins** (Acts 2:38).

As a Christian, you should recognize the good things that can happen in God’s work because of you. The life of a Christian is a blessed life. The Christian life is also a blessing to others.

What will happen because of you? Will it be good, or evil?

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THE AMARANTH

“*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*” (1 Peter 1:3-4).

When farmers hear the word “amaranth” they may think of a weed, but the amaranth is also a flower. Because it retains its color when dried it is sometimes used in dried flower arrangements.

Guy N. Woods wrote in his commentary on First Peter 1:4 saying, “The words, ‘fadeth not away,’ are translated from the beautiful word *amarantos*, that which does not fade or wither. The amaranth was a fabled flower whose bloom was perpetual, and whose loveliness never failed. The inheritance that awaits the children of God will not deteriorate, nor will passing ages render it less desirable or attractive.”

Peter uses this word again in 1 Peter 4:4 where he writes of “*a crown of glory that fadeth not away*.” In Peter’s day, champions were rewarded with a wreath of laurel leaves. The laurel leaves soon faded away, but not the reward promised to God’s faithful servants.

We might relate to roses. Sometimes the winner of a contest is given a bouquet of roses, but the roses fade. In one of our old songs we sing, “*I am going to a city, where the roses never fade*.”

Bill Boyd
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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

hope you continue in the years to come" ...**Ernest Armstrong, Pecos, TX.** "As always, I appreciate you all providing this great brotherhood publication to me here in prison. The elder's column in the Jan/15 issue by Roger Campbell, *Does God Hear All Prayers?* was most helpful. Thanks and God bless you all" ...**Michael Winborn, Crawfordville, FL.** "I was given some papers from a friend. I liked them very much. One was *Wherefore Didst Thou Doubt?* and the other one was *What Christians Do On Christmas Day*. Would you send me some more? Thank you" ...**Joann Higbie, Dewitt, MI.** "Would love to get this publication. Thank you" ...**Eric Farrow, Freeport, FL.** "Thank you for sending me *Seek The Old Paths*. I really enjoy it" ...**Alta McAteer, Greenbrier, AR.** "It has been a number of years since I sat in the auditorium at Freed Hardeman University (actually it was the old Bader Gym in the 70's, and still called FCC) and listened to Guy N. Woods logically, and simply, present answers to various questions. He would then allow those who wanted to respond to come to one of the microphones and make a comment or ask a question. One gentleman approached the mike and asked, 'Brother Woods, what is the spiritual condition of a man who divorces his wife for a cause other than fornication, and then marries another.' Brother Woods simply quoted Matthew 19:9, and in typical fashion, backed off the mike a short distance as a gesture to let the man respond. The man then responded, 'But brother Woods, what if he did not know any better?' Brother Woods again quoted from Matthew 19:9 without any additional comments. The man then responded, 'But brother Woods, not everybody sees it the way you see it.' Brother Woods then stepped to the mike and commented something to this effect: I just read the scripture. By acknowledging that not everyone sees it the way you see it, you are in effect saying they do not see it the way Jesus stated it. The truth of Matthew 19:9 is not difficult to understand. It is simply a matter of believing it and obeying it" ...**Tom Wacaster, Ft. Worth, TX.** "Keep up the good work" ...**James W. Berry, Montgomery, AL.** "Please discontinue mailing STOP. Thanks. Contribution enclosed" ...**Farrell Nalls, Greenville, TX.** "Please cancel my postal as I can pick it up on computer. Thanks" ...**Jim Blansett, Search, AR.** "We enjoy reading the great articles in *Seek The Old Paths*. We are enclosing a check to help with the expenses" ...**Roy Whitlock, elder, Shady Grove C/C, Morrison, TN.** "Brethren, I would appreciate receiving, to my e-mail address, the excellent STOP brotherhood paper. We have enjoyed this paper for many years. Please keep up this great work of keeping the body of Christ informed about the "good and the bad" that is taking place" ...**Tim Bies.** "I would like to be added to your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Sandy Farmer, Trumann, AR.** "Please remove me from your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Sean Treadway, Culpepper, VA.** "Thank you" ...**Susan Hampton, Marion, AR.** "Thank you for your help! You do a great work!" ...**Brandon Baggett, Valdosta, GA.** "We receive your publication, *Seek The Old Paths*", and find it helpful. Our eldership is interested in helping to support your publication. Please let me know who to make checks out to and where to send them. We truly appreciate the work that you do" ...**Rick Brewer, Neely's Bend C/C, Madison, TN.** [NOTE: Checks can be made out to **Leoni C/C or Seek The Old Paths** and sent to: **PO Box 7506, McMinnville, TN 37111.**] "Please find check enclosed to help with expenses. Thank you" ...**Sharon Higginson, Evansville, IN.** "I would like to receive a copy of your publication on a regu-

lar basis. My late husband, Doyle C. Walker, and I received the *Banner of Truth* as long as it was in publication. The exclusive truths of God's Word needs to be spread and your paper is a very good means of doing so. Enclosed is a small donation to help keep your work afloat" ...**Emma Walker, Eddyville, KY.** "Becky Lynch has passed away" ...**Hohenwald, TN.** "Please remove from mailing list" ...**Kay Murphy, Hohenwald, TN.** "Received your offer to add me to your mailing list as a reader of BOT. It was sad for us all to lose our brave soldier for the Truth, Walter Pigg. But, I will certainly welcome the prospect of receiving your paper and will indeed pray for you in your likewise valiant efforts. Would hope that I could someday visit the congregation there. Meantime, would you please pray for me? I know from Scripture that God lets us go through things to help make us stronger in Him. Please pray that I may be strengthened. Thank you so much" ...**A. P., Memphis, TN.** "Will you please put these names on your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*? Thanks in Christ" ...**Joe Turbeville, Dresden, TN.** "Avery Womble has passed away" ...**Tyler, TX.** "Please put me on the mailing list. I want to receive the paper *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you and may God Bless You. To God be the glory forever and forever. Amen" ...**Danny Reynolds, Luverne, AL.** "Please cancel my subscription to STOP as I'm moving and will be able to read it on line also. Thank you" ...**Barbara Johnson, Apopka, FL.** "Here is our contribution to help with your expense in supplies, printing and postage of STOP. May the Lord continue to bless you and your work" ...**Dale & Oleta Eyberg, Fernley, NV.**

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