



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

Vol. 31, No. 6

June 2020

WORLDLINESS

*Franklin Camp
(1915-1991)*

Worldliness is conforming to the world.

Worldliness is anything that is opposed to being transformed.

Worldliness is “world-like-ness” in anything. Worldliness is anything that is not Christ-like or that hinders “Christ-likeness.” Worldliness is sin.

After careful study, I have come to the conclusion that worldliness is the greatest threat facing the church today. I am fully convinced that the majority of our problems, individually and collectively, are rooted in this one problem. I believe that at the bottom of the problems of attendance, small contributions, and the lack of development of Christians, will be found in worldliness. Just a moment in reflection will show this is true. Who attends the services of the church faithfully — the most spiritual, or the worldly members of the church? Who is most concerned with their development in the Christian life — the spiritual, or the worldly member?

DEFINITION TOO LIMITED

I am also convinced that our definition of worldliness has been too narrow. If this is true, then I am afraid that preachers and teachers have contributed toward worldliness by leaving the wrong impression on some. Too often we have confined the term to some few things, which were certainly worldly, but were far from covering everything that should be included in the term. Many members of the church

think that because they do not dance, or wear immodest clothes, play bridge, and a few other similar things, they are not worldly, yet in God’s sight they are. I do not mean to suggest by this that these things are not worldly and that they should not be condemned, but we should not leave the impression that worldliness is confined to these.

Jesus said in John 17:11,16, “*these are in the world...they are not of the world.*” How broad is the phrase, “not of the world?” Does it not include ALL THAT BELONGS TO THE WORLD? When John says, “*Love not the world*” (1 John 2:15), just how broad is that? Is it confined to some few things, or does it cover all that belongs to the world? Have you ever wanted any particular thing more than all else in the world; and, been willing to go to any extreme to attain it? Have you decided what you want your life to count for or have you ignored such a decision? Would not either of the above be worldly when measured by God’s standard?

WORLDLINESS

What is worldliness? Worldliness is sin. Worldliness is conforming to the world. Worldliness is anything

that is opposed to being transformed. Worldliness is “world-like-ness” in anything. Worldliness is anything that is not Christ-like or that hinders “Christ-likeness.” Worldliness is a wedge that sin drives into the heart of the member of the church, disuniting his own will and God’s will for him, making his actions incompatible with his spiritual potentialities, because he allows selfish interests to usurp the place of God in his life.

MAJORING IN TEMPORAL INSTEAD OF SPIRITUAL THINGS

Worldliness, the opposite of spirituality, is an obsession with temporal, material things, to the exclusion of spiritual growth and to the neglect of spiritual interests. Worldliness is a force that sidetracks the Christian from his greatest function — fruitful service. When one persists in worldliness, he will inevitably decrease in spiritual perception. Worldliness is majoring on the temporal rather than the spiritual, for habits, attitudes, and inconsistencies that produce barriers, minimize influence, and make the per-

(Continued on page 46)
Worldliness...



Guest Editorial

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE #1

James W. Boyd

There is not anything in service to God for which we do not need His authority. Peter said that God has “given all things that pertain to life and godliness.” I wish all of my brethren believed that. The denominational world never has believed it.

If ever there was a time when Christians need to say what we believe and why we believe it, this is the day. I say this not with a tone of despair, but with justified and genuine concern, and even more as a challenge, that it is strange that among people who have been a part of efforts to restore the faith revealed in the New Testament, that we need some straight talk about Biblical authority, the necessity for it, and its nature.

Denominations have never accepted the Bible as authority as the Bible demands. At best, they have accepted the Bible alongside their creeds, disciplines, manuals, edicts of councils, conferences, prayer books, feelings, human traditions, later day revelations, etc. But it is increasingly apparent that a renewed emphasis for the need of Biblical authority exists among brethren of the churches of Christ. Too many have adopted too much of the denominational attitude and outlook toward religious authority.

SHALL WE PUT IT ASIDE?

What if I should come before you to preach, but I put the Bible aside? What could I say? Would I even have a place to start or a place to go with any lesson worthy of the identification of a Gospel sermon? Would there be any authoritative basis for anything I could preach? But this is what the religious world has done and in the place of the Bible there is a drumbeat of worthless theologies, philosophies, human opinions, politics, social reform, and as often as not, propaganda that is anti-Bible even though it is called

preaching the Bible; and, coming from the mouths of those egotists who profess themselves to be superior in everything.

While many brethren are unwilling to go that far, just yet, there is too much of what I note among brethren that consists of “how to” pep talks, religious fiction, testimonials, and a page from the emotion-stirring “holy rollers.” We have been setting the Bible aside, not all at once, but bit by bit. We have acted, in too many instances, like the Bible is a loose-leaf notebook and we are removing pages one by one.

Some have even declared Genesis one through eleven to be a myth, the flood possibly nothing more than a local flood, even distorting the plan of salvation as if it was “grace alone.” One of the areas where some brethren are guilty of departing from Biblical authority is in the work of the church. Some years ago some arose to deny work(s) that the Bible does not authorize, but now more and more we see churches involved in activities such as recreation, physical exercise classes, entertainment, social events, ball games, gymnasiums, secular education, until one cannot tell the difference between the Lord’s church and the denominations with their perverted attitudes toward the church. Many others have, for all practical purposes, silenced any teaching regarding dancing, social drinking, immodest dress, smoking, etc. because too many of the members are guilty, and preachers and elders prefer to please the people. False doctrines are taught on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, such as is taught in colleges, promoted in workshops, and in written materials. A few

continue to rightly condemn the long-hair on males, but most “disregard what the Bible teaches and think it acceptable to present themselves as if they are of the drug, rock-and-roll sub-culture. Who is not aware of the contentions over the direct operation of the Holy Spirit many have adopted? Yes, bit by bit, even some who claim to be New Testament Christians are tearing out verse after verse, page after page, of the Word of God.

I ask where is the real difference between tearing up the Bible bit by bit, and throwing it away abruptly altogether? In fact, the only difference might be, the former is more deceptive and subtle, but both efforts accomplish the same disastrous results. One is blatant, and easily detected. The other is sly, gradual, and goes without notice unless one is very attentive.

LIBERALISM / MODERNISM

The most pressing issue facing those who believe the Bible today is the vicious attack of Liberalism and Modernism. Even now we are hearing some of our “scholars” in Bible departments talking about how the threat of liberalism has passed, and now the area of danger is what these liberal professors call “the reactionary right wing.” This is to remove attention from their own sordid digression and departure from the truth. We have to make a choice to either respect the Bible as the Word of God and the all-sufficient authority of it, or launch into a “do your own thing” imitation of the failures of denominationalism. Some are already promoting the latter even as they deny they are doing it. The very nature of the Bible demands you take it all, or nothing. The Bible is not a religious supermarket where you can take what you want and leave out what you do not want.

Unless we are so proud, egotistical, blind, naive, and digressive, we cannot deny the existence of the digressive attitudes and activities that have invaded the Lord’s people in recent decades, primarily through the avenue of the Bible departments of the colleges, the sophisticated and know-it-all professors, the compromising administrations, the ecumenical lectureships, the literature of compromise often promoted for the sake of making money but used in Bible classes, and the continued willingness of those who say

they are faithful but who keep using, promoting, and endorsing the very people who are leading the church away from the Bible. Toleration of this liberal trend will sweep away much of the Lord's church, if not in our day (and we believe in our day), surely in the generation that follows because it is designed and intended to "up date, make relevant, change, revise, alter, restructure" the church for modern times.

GOD'S WORD

All we know and believe is on the basis of evidence, and that evidence is in Scripture. God has spoken and revealed His Will. The Bible is that revelation. When any person gets to the point that "thus saith the Lord" is not the standard, and when he thinks there is no necessity for Biblical authority, then nothing is left. When any people become more concerned with reactions, what denominational people may think, how popular and prosperous something may be, then the way of apostasy is already paved and greased. Too many today, in a cowardly and sinister pretense of piety, prefer "peace" at the sacrifice of truth. Many times, and we have seen it, what ought to be the first and dominant consideration in matters pertaining to the church and the truth, is neglected altogether in favor of assuring acceptance and favor among certain ones, often among the "big names," the wealthy, socially elite, and worldly minded, numbers-conscious promoters. Time and again, instead of seeking Biblical authority for what is said or done, we hear the statement, "I don't see anything wrong with this or that." Just because somebody may not see any harm in something does not mean that God's authority is supporting it. Our question should be, "What does the Bible teach?" When we respect the Bible as divine authority, this is what we will be asking.

There are commandments from God that rest entirely upon His authority for which we may not see the reason behind it. It may not be something that appeases our senses of ethics or morality. But it is commanded of us, and because of the sovereignty of God we are accountable to obey. When God speaks, man is to hear and heed. We must have the attitude of Samuel when he said, "Speak Lord,

for thy servant heareth" (1 Samuel 3:9). We cannot know what God desires unless we hear His Word. When we are not following His directions, we are going the wrong way. Man's ways are never superior to His.

GOD IS AUTHORITY

Jesus said, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). He not only possesses all authority, He is authority. What He taught is that which the Holy Spirit reminded the Lord's apostles (John 14, 15, 16). What they taught was the will of the Lord. What they taught is now embodied in the all-sufficient, authoritative, inerrant, verbally inspired, infallible Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

We want to turn our attention to the nature of the authority of the Bible which will occupy the rest of this lesson and the second part as well. We approach our study in full realization that the acceptance of the Scriptures is to accept Christ, and to reject the Scriptures is to reject Christ. The authority of Christ is the Bible.

SUPREME

God's authority is SUPREME authority. In Ephesians 1:20-23, Paul was writing of what God had done, "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Again, Colossians 1:18, "And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead: that in all things he might have the preeminence." Our Lord is this authority because He is Deity, and as Deity in the flesh, He lived a sinless life. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 1:22). His authority is the religious "supreme court." One can appeal no higher. There is no other.

There was a time for Israel when the law that God gave through Moses was the authority. But that law has served its purpose, been fulfilled, and taken out of the way (Matt. 5:17-18; Gal. 3:23-25; Col. 2:14). No man can set aside God's law except Deity. The Lord Jesus accomplished what that law was designed to introduce. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34). "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30).

There is no council, pope, conference, convention, lectureship, preacher, editor, so-called scholar, school Bible department, perverted Bible, civil government, eldership, social organization, fraternal order, or any such thing that can alter, surpass, overshadow, revise, or in any way change the authority of Jesus Christ.

SUFFICIENT

God's authority is SUFFICIENT. It is not partial nor incomplete. None can say, "Here is something we can do in service to God for which we need no divine authority." One of the reasons there have been so many innovations, digressions, and introductions of false ideas into "Christianity" is because some have thought the authority of Christ was lacking in some way and they have supplied what they think the Lord overlooked. How many times have men engaged in something for which there was no Biblical authority and then cried, "Where does the Bible forbid it?" That is not the right question.

When we do what we do "in the name of" Christ, as we are taught to do (Col. 3:17), we must ask, "Where does the Bible authorize it?" Doing something on the basis that the Bible does not specifically forbid it is to assert the insufficiency of the authority of Christ. On this mistaken notion many brethren have gone into the playground church business, secular education, entertainment, use of mechanical instruments, and anything else somebody might want. There is not anything in service to God for

which we do not need His authority. Peter said that God has “*given all things that pertain to life and godliness*” (2 Peter 1:3). I wish all of my brethren believed that. The denominational world never has believed it.

UNIVERSAL

God’s authority is UNIVERSAL. His Gospel is to be preached to every creature in all the world (Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19). The faith of Christ is not a family religion as was the Patriarchal system. Nor is it a national religion as was Judaism. Regardless of where people may dwell, those of every nation that fear Him and do His will are acceptable (Acts 10:34-35). What some of our own people need to learn is that the Gospel that saves the poor, also saves the rich. The Gospel that saves the young, saves the old. This concept of making the Gospel relevant to the ghetto, or adapting it to the nuclear scientists, or making it fit the singles group, or this divorced group, or this youth group, or this senior citizens group, is to miss one of the important characteristics of the authority of Christ. The truth is just as binding on this generation as the past generation, or the next generation. “*The word of the Lord endureth forever*” (1 Peter 1:25). There is no Gospel for the north and a Gospel for the south. There is no truth while at home and something different away from home on vacation. There is not one truth for one nation and another truth for a different nation. What the Lord teaches me, He teaches you. Some of our “learned” brethren need to learn that basic fundamental.

While there are passages directed toward women, some toward men, some toward the young, toward parents, preachers, elders, sinners, saints, His authority, His truth, His saving plan does not vary from place to place. It is universal in scope.

We shall continue this thinking in the second part next month.

2720 S Chancery St.
McMinnville, TN 37110

**SEND US YOUR
CHANGE OF ADDRESS
WHEN YOU MOVE**

ISAIAH’S PENTECOST PROPHECY

Bill Boyd

Isaiah 2, Joel 2, and Daniel 2, all find their fulfillment in Acts 2. Isaiah’s Pentecost prophecy is Isaiah 2:2-4. Micah gave the same prophecy in almost the same words in Micah 4:1-3. Micah was preaching in villages of Judea about the time Isaiah was preaching in the city of Jerusalem; and, they were preaching the same thing. Some say Isaiah may have learned his prophecy from Micah, and some say Micah may have learned his from Isaiah. The truth is, we do not know that either learned it from either. Isaiah said it was “*the word*” which he “*saw*” (Isa. 2:1), and Micah said, “*In that day, saith the LORD...*” (Micah 4:6), thus, each attributed his knowledge to divine revelation.

Isaiah spoke of “*Zion*” in his introductory sermon. He said, “*Therefore saith the LORD...I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, the city of righteousness, the faithful city*” (Isa. 1:24-27). These words, coming near the end of Isaiah 1, and just prior to the Pentecost prophecy of Isaiah 2, puts them in a Messianic context.

Isaiah spoke of the “*last days*” (Isa. 2:2). Peter said Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2:28-32) was about the “*last days*” (Acts 2:17). Peter used Isaiah’s “*last days*” language when speaking of Joel’s prophecy, tying both of their prophecies to Pentecost.

Isaiah spoke of “*the mountain of the LORD’s house*” (Isa. 2:2). Nathan the prophet had told David that the LORD would build his house and his kingdom, and declared that it would be the house and kingdom of one from David (2 Sam. 7:12-17). In prophetic language, “*mountain*” means “*kingdom*,” and this kingdom would be greater than all earthly kingdoms, for it would be “*established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills*” (Isa. 2:2). This is the mountain kingdom that Daniel spoke of in Daniel 2:35 and 2:44, “*The stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth...and in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.*”

Isaiah said, “*All nations shall flow*

into it, and many people shall go and say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob” (Isa. 2:2-3). On the day of Pentecost, “*There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven*” (Acts 2:5), and Peter said of the Gospel that he preached, “*The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*” (Acts 2:39). This includes the Gentiles, for Jesus had said, “*Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*” (Acts 1:8). The book of Acts tells the story of this Gospel going to the Gentiles.

Isaiah said, “*He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*” (Isa. 2:3). Before Jesus ascended into heaven he said, “*Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*” (Luke 24:47). It was in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1), where Peter first preached, “*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*” (Acts 2:38), and this is the Gospel that went from Jerusalem into all the world (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; Col. 1:23).

Isaiah said, “*He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more*” (Isa. 2:4). The church that was established on Pentecost (Acts 2:47) is where people of all nations are to come together in peace (Eph. 2:13-17).

Isaiah 2:2-4 is not directly referenced in the New Testament, but knowing that Isaiah was among the prophets that foretold of those days (Luke 24:44; Acts 3:24), and seeing Isaiah’s many prophetic pointers to New Testament teachings and events, we can be confident that this is a prophecy of Pentecost.

umhbody@aol.com
647 Finger Bluff Rd.
Morrison, TN 37357

Elder's COLUMN

WHY WRITE ON THE SIN OF DIVISION?

The answer to the question “Why Write On The Sin Of Division?” is because division is:

- 1) Against the prayer of Christ. *“Neither pray I for these [apostles] alone, but for them also [all mankind] which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me”* (John 17:20-21),
- 2) Against the plea of the apostle Paul. *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all **speak the same thing**, and [that] there be **no divisions among you**; but that ye be **perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment**”* (1 Cor. 1:10),
- 3) Because sin is the driving force behind division!

I have the obligation, as do all Gospel preachers, to “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2) on any and all subjects. Truth and truth alone is the purpose of our preaching. *“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**”* (John 8:31-32)!

For churches of Christ to criticize and condemn division in the religious world, and pretend that the “elephant” is not in the room, is the height of hypocrisy! Self-examination (2 Cor. 13:5), honesty, and a sincere desire to do whatever is biblically right is always in order. David wrote, *“I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments”* (Psalm 119:59-60).

We must keep in mind that problems and conflicts in the Lord’s church will always be with us. As painful as it might be, we must accept the realization that some conflicts are not

going to be resolved. However, this does not necessarily mean that the problems were not adequately dealt with according to the Scriptures. Sad but true, some simply refuse to obey the truth!

The ultimate goal, of course, is biblically resolving the conflicts. As trite as it may sound, the underlying factor in the failure of resolving conflicts is because one or all parties involved were not willing to do what is right. If prayer and the word of God cannot resolve conflicts within the body of Christ, then they cannot be solved! We need to always remember, it’s far better to resolve conflicts now, than to meet the Lord at judgment when it will be too late (2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27)!

After the storm has passed and serious reflection upon the matter, those of an honest heart will want to do whatever is biblically (not politically) right! A question seldom considered by many, is “Has there been any attempt to restore fellowship with those who left?” While such efforts often fail, there have been instances where fellowship was restored. Many years ago in Tennessee an entire congregation responded to the invitation, repented of the division, and fellowship was restored. Tears of joy were shed and the world saw a demonstration of love for the cause of Christ. Jesus said, *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”* (John 13:34-35)!

We must always keep in mind, *“The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth”* (Psalm 33:13-14). And, *“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good”* (Prov. 15:3).

All will stand before the Lord at the day of judgment (Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10), including all those who have had a hand in dividing the body

of Christ. It will be too late to correct any wrongs on that day! Think about that!

*Ivie Powell
PO Box 92
West Plains, MO 65775*

CONTRIBUTIONS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Timothy R. Williams | \$10 |
| Garland & Myra Lee Barnwell | 25 |
| Wood C/C, Woodbury, TN | \$50 |
| Baker C/C, Baker, FL | \$25 |
| Midland C/C, Midland, MI..... | \$200 |
| Charlie & Shirley Rector | \$100 |
| Anonymous | \$200 |
| Richard Gaines | \$30 |
| Gene & Linda Goza | \$250 |
| Donzella Malone..... | \$20 |
| Lorraine Olive | \$100 |
| Anonymous | \$100 |
| Anonymous | \$25 |
| Samuel & Ida Nell Pearson..... | \$20 |
| Robert & Betty Simmons..... | \$50 |
| Anonymous | \$100 |
| Mary E. Childs..... | \$25 |
| Midway C/C, Murfreesboro, TN | \$100 |
| Anonymous | \$100 |
| Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN | \$50 |
| Del Brantley | \$50 |
| Anonymous | \$250 |
| John & Brenda Manz..... | \$25 |
| Ray Tenpenny | \$40 |
| Marlene Dyer..... | \$100 |
| Jean Ware | \$25 |
| Anonymous | \$50 |
| Carl & Agnes Thomsen | \$20 |
| Midway C/C, Murfreesboro, TN | \$100 |
| Beth Ann Foster | \$25 |
| Melonie & Peter Masih | \$75 |
| Jean Berry | \$25 |
| Douglas C. Ward | \$50 |
| Wood C/C, Woodbury, TN | \$50 |
| Anonymous | \$125 |
| Shirley Hopper | \$50 |
| Alyne Matthews | \$20 |
| Sue McDaniel | \$10 |
| Anonymous | \$100 |
| Baker C/C, Baker, FL | \$25 |
| Anonymous | \$25 |
| Neelys Bend C/C, Madison, TN | \$125 |
| Bethlehem C/C, Baxter, TN | \$100 |
| Anonymous | \$25 |

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$12,011.33 |
| Contributions | \$ 3,070.00 |
| Refund | \$ 38.00 |
| Debits | |
| Postage | \$ 1,810.24 |
| Supplies..... | \$ 347.70 |
| Ending Balance | \$12,961.39 |

Worldliness...

(Continued from page 41)

manence of our fellowship with God less vital.

INDIFFERENCE TO MORAL VALUES

Worldliness is a cancer which creates an indifference to moral values, a “no difference” attitude about right or wrong, and ordering of lives without reference to Christian ideals. Worldliness is anything that leads away from God rather than closer to God. It makes a person insensitive to real abiding values and, in most cases, unsteady in Christian life. Worldliness is one of the primary stages of vice (though it is not vice in every instance). Immorality is worldliness, but not all worldliness is in immorality. Worldliness splits an individual’s loyalties, making him selfish, spiritually indifferent, careless, nearsighted, and complacent. These are all unbecoming qualities that nourish unchristian attitudes and belong to the world.

What is your primary concern? Is it to be a social leader, prominent, comfortable, wealthy, popular, living in ease, spending all of your free time in some sort of pleasure that may be right in itself, or is it to be the best Christian possible — whether these other things come or not? These things may be worthy of attainment, but not to the neglect of spiritual growth. Their proper place, if they come, are by-products in the life of one who’s major interest is to make Christ supreme in his life.

Let us keep in mind that worldliness is the opposite of spirituality; and obsession with temporal and material things to the detriment of spiritual growth. One does not have to be knee-deep in sin to be worldly. The person who considers himself a “pretty good fellow,” but whose ideals are material and self-centered is, according to the Bible, a worldly person.

WHY ARE SO MANY MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH WORLDLY?

I would say the first cause is a *failure to properly evaluate life*. Too many members of the church have not learned the real values of life. They are interested in finding happiness, but do not know where it is to be

found. It has never dawned on them that happiness is determined by what one is. Look at the beatitudes and note the emphasis on character. Substitute the word “happy” for the word “blessed” and re-read the beatitudes. Someone describes Paul in prison as follows: “with life and all that men count dear behind, and with the horrors of a barbarous death before him, alone, unfriended and suckered, he is yet the happiest man in Rome. Among the millions within her wide walls, not another heart is so buoyant with hope, so lifted with you.” This was true of Paul because he had learned life’s value. He was happy because of what he was.

A second reason so many members of the church are worldly, is that *they have never tried to reach their potential in Christian living*. Life will not remain a vacuum. It will be filled with something. If all Christians would make a determined effort to fill their lives with good, there would not be any place for the worldly. Too many are satisfied to just “get in” the church, and then just do as little as possible! The natural result from such is to fill the void that is left with worldliness. God knew what he was doing when he said, “seek ye first the kingdom of God” (Matt. 6:33) This is not just an arbitrary command. It has as its basis the building of a life that is spiritual. The way to get worldliness out, is to put something in its place! Just as long as there are members of the church who refuse to fill their lives with service for God, there will be worldly members.

A third reason for so much worldliness in the church is *indifference*. This is perhaps one of the greatest hindrances to the solution of the problem. It is so much easier to travel the path of least resistance, to take the road mapped out by others, than it is to find out whether it is right or not. So many members of the church live day after day not caring that they have no influence for good and are not interested in learning why. They are afraid if they got interested it would upset their own lives and they just do not want this to happen. Let the preacher present any lesson and they refuse to give it even a passing thought.

A fourth reason for worldliness in the church is that *there are some who do not want to pay the price that is*

necessary to be spiritual. The story is told of a young woman, who having observed the charming life and broad influence of a fine Christian woman, went to her and said, “I would give the world if I could only have your influence.” The lady replied, “that is exactly what it costs.” There is a price for everything, and spirituality is no exception. Until more Christians are willing to pay the price of spirituality, the church will be filled with worldliness.

A fifth reason for worldliness in the church is that *many are guided by custom rather than the Bible*. There are many members of the church who want the Bible on the plan of salvation, the church, its organization, and worship; but, they do not want the Bible on worldliness. Do they ever give chapter and verse for their worldly practices? No. Their theme song is: “everybody else is doing it,” “I can’t see any harm in it.” That is exactly what denominational people say about instrumental music. Why reject their plea for instrumental music and then turn right around and use their old worn-out arguments for your worldly practices? Then some say, “I can do it and it won’t hurt me.” Suppose you could. Can a conscientious Christian be happy when he knows he is giving his time and lending his influence in that which degrades more than it uplifts?

Let us face the threat of worldliness and build lives that are spiritual.

The acceptance of the Scriptures is to accept Christ, and to reject the Scriptures is to reject Christ. The authority of Christ is the Bible. His authority is the religious "supreme court." One can appeal no higher. There is no other. There is no council, pope, conference, convention, lectureship, preacher, editor, so-called scholar, school Bible department, perverted Bible, civil government, eldership, social organization, fraternal order, or any such thing that can alter, surpass, overshadow, revise, or in any way change the authority of Jesus Christ.

WORSHIP ACCORDING TO GOD'S PATTERN

David Holland

Serious Bible students know that for a person's activity "in or out" of the worship service to be acceptable to God, he must do whatever he does according to God's standard for that activity. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (2 John 9-10). "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).

Bible investigation reveals God's expectations for specific acts of worship and established patterns or forms by which those acts are to be carried out. To go beyond the teachings of Christ by attempting to offer an act of worship not authorized by Scripture has seldom been thought of by those of the Restoration Movement. On the few occasions when such thoughts have been expressed, they were soundly defeated with a demand for a "thus saith the Lord." Thus, only five acts of worship are allowed in the worship services of the churches of Christ:

1) **Prayer** — "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

2) **Teaching** — "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7).

3) **Singing** — "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16).

4) **Giving** — "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that

there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

5) **Communion** — "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:17ff; Acts 20:7).

The intent of this article is to warn against the failure to have a "thus saith the Lord" for the pattern used in the carrying out of the authorized acts of worship.

The **Lord's Supper** is vital for Christians to observe. Jesus commanded it in Matthew 26:26-29. It is equally important that the would-be worshipper observe the Lord's Supper with the proper attitude and proper objects. Only *unleavened bread* and *fruit of the vine* have been authorized by God. Coke and potato chips will not suffice regardless of one's attitude. A "thus saith the Lord" settles the question as noted in Matthew 26:26-29.

Prayer has a pattern. Man is to address God through the name of Christ (Col. 3:17), not through God's name, not in man's name. Prayer is offered in the name of Christ. It matters not if man prays publicly or privately, he must follow the pattern of prayer.

Teaching also has a form (Rom. 6:17). Man is not permitted to teach anything he chooses in the name of Christ. Neither is he allowed to use dishonest means in attempts to teach the doctrines of Christ (Col. 3:17).

The **Offering** is discussed by God in 2 Corinthians 9 and 1 Corinthians 16. The *intent*, the *amount*, the *method* are discussed. Man has not been left to his own choosing in this matter. Giving according to the pattern of God is vital — not by raffles; not a business; not taxation, but freewill giving.

Singing is involved in worship as given by Bible instruction. A pattern is to be followed (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:15; Heb. 13:15 James 5:13; Acts 16:25). Every passage demands singing — not singing and playing, or playing instead of singing. It is always

singing. In every case, public or private, the pattern is to be followed. Please note that the pattern also includes such things as singles and multiples participating in these acts of worship.

Examples of **Prayer** include one praying to God alone (John 17); multiples praying to God with one leading the prayer (1 Cor. 14). Yet, never do we find multiples orally praying as multiples!

Teaching is found in the form of one teaching another (Acts 8), and one teaching multiples (Acts 2). Never do we find multiples teaching multiples at the same time. Each is to speak in turn (1 Cor. 14).

Giving is always within the pattern. Each gives as he has prospered (1 Cor. 16). No one can give for another, or tax another.

When **Communion** is taken, there is a pattern to be followed in the worship service. Each participant partakes of the *unleavened bread* and the *fruit of the vine* with the proper attitude (1 Cor. 11).

Singing has its pattern - the individual sings to God to praise His name and rejoice (James 5:13); multiples sing to God (Eph. 5:9), and in the process teach and admonish one another (Col. 3:16). Nowhere in Scripture is there permission for one to sing to multiples, or for multiples to sing to multiples in the worship service of our Lord. Thus, solos and group singing are not according to the pattern of God.

Are you following the pattern?

God's abundant grace and mercy is extended unto all mankind alike. "For there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:11; cf. Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17).

1) Jehovah's divinity demands respect (Gen. 17:1; Psalm 81:10).

2) His goodness demands attention (Rom. 11:22; Psalm 73:1).

3) Following his Way gains reward (Heb. 11:6; Luke 6:23; Psalm 58:11).

You can be a partaker of God's goodness if you will repent and keep His commandments. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“James Wesley Berry, Sr., 82 years old of Montgomery, Alabama, passed away on November 7, 2019. He was born in Deatsville, Alabama, one of ten children. He was a member of the church for sixty-six years and served as an elder, Bible class teacher and diligent worker in the kingdom. His passion was teaching others the Gospel through personal evangelism which resulted in over 150 people being led to Christ. He was also known for his Bible tracts ministry. He is survived by his dear wife of sixty-one years, Jean Berry; son, Wesley (Wilma) Berry; three granddaughters, whom he adored; and eight great-grandchildren. James and Jean were a delightful Christian couple and untiring workers in the kingdom. He loved *Seek The Old Paths* and looked forward to it every month. He would often call to ask how I was doing and the work was going. He was a generous contributor to STOP and would ask for hundreds of extra copies to pass around as well as providing dozens of names to be added to the mailing list. He was always an eager helper and promoter of the faith. He fought a good fight. He finished his course. He kept the faith. He is now resting in Paradise awaiting that great final judgment day. Our loss is eternity’s gain” ...**Garland M. Robinson**. “Please remove my name from your mailing list, I wish to unsubscribe” ...**Tim Mickelson, Mesquite, TX**. “I appreciate the back issues you sent. God bless” ...**James L. Taylor, Georgetown, TX**. “Thank you for adding me to your mailing list” ...**Robert Womack, Pikeville, TN**. “**Baldwin Key** has passed away” ...**Northport, AL**. “Please remove me from your mailing list. Thank you” ...**Tim Stickel, Fairbanks, AK**. “Wonderful” ...**Jason Gann, McMinnville, TN**. “To God be the glory for people like you” ...**Elsie Weatherford, Saltillo, MS**. “**Wesley Wheeler** has passed away” ...**Wauneta, NE**. “Your paper, *Seek The Old Paths* came to my son’s mail box. My son, **Mac Swift** (Mountain City, TN) passed away in March. Could I please receive his paper? I truly love the little paper. Hope to see it in my mail very soon” ...**Barbara Kyte, Butler, TN**. “We look forward to receiving your wonderful publication at our new address” ...**Gary Hall, Apalachicola, FL**. “Thanks. Jesus loves you. We love you. God bless you. Have a blessed day every day. Thanks again. Take off post mailing list” ...**Kay Wooding, South Bend, IN**. “I would like to receive *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Sue Trammell, Tifton, GA**. “I was re-reading various articles and Bible studies in my box and came across an article from Dec/2018. I was glad to see it is FREE and defends the Truth! It is much needed here in prison where any belief about the Bible goes. Any way, I would like to subscribe to your publication *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Eric Fuller, London, OH**. “Dear brethren, I am enclosing a check to help in the publication of *STOP*. It is a worthwhile publication. Keep up the good work” ...**James C. Puckett, Midland church of Christ, Midland, MI**. “We really enjoy reading *STOP*” ...**Robert & Betty Simmons, Glenpool, OK**. “Enjoy your paper!” ...**Joe & Ida Nell Pearson, Bertram, TX**. “I enjoy *Seek The Old Paths* so much. I would like to say thank you all for the good work you do with *STOP* and I pray with all that’s going on at this time that *STOP* will reach people’s hearts and help them to see and to choose the word of God as the one and only Gospel! Thank you all again for your good work of the Gospel of Christ” ...**name withheld by request, AL**. “Thank you for all the great work that you do. Keep up the good work. I look forward to my paper each month” ...**Lorraine Olive, Tuscumbia, AL**. “Please change my address. Thank you” ...**Ron Milliner, Brownsburg, IN**. “Thank you all for all you do. We love the

paper” ...**William & Donzella Malone, Indianapolis, IN**. “Please terminate sending copies of your fine publication. *Seek The Old Paths* has been inspirational to read, but at this point in my Christianity, I much more covet your prayers. Time has been hard on me. May you continue to be blessed. Thank you” ...**Timothy R. Williams, Wellsville, OH**. “We deeply appreciate the work you do. It is greatly needed. God bless your efforts” ...**Gene & Linda Goza, Jonesboro, AR**. “I look forward to *STOP* — good sound scriptures. There are wonderful children of faith that write encouraging words. I pray that each and everyone would pray for me. I would be humbly grateful. Thank you so much for this publication. It renews my heart and spirit. Thank you. God keep you in his care. Bless Leoni church of Christ” ...**Norma Sullins, Murfreesboro, TN**. “Thank you for *STOP*. You and the writers are doing a great job and others in the brotherhood” ...**Charlie & Shirley Rector, Dayton, TN**. “I hope this note find you alright. I am from the church of Christ in Columbia, Mississippi. I would like to have some materials from the *Seek The Old Paths* paper. The papers are very helpful in teaching” ...**Billy Warren, Columbia, MS**. “Thank you for your good work. Enjoy getting the paper” ...**Shirley Hopper, Nashville, TN**. “Your paper is just what the churches need to preach” ...**Alyne Matthews, Clinton, TN**. “Thank you for sending me this wonderful paper” ...**Sue McDaniel, Eddy, TX**. “Thank you” ...**Josh & Molly McDonald, Mount Hope, KS**. “Curtis Bolin has passed away” ...**Garland, TX**. “Please keep up the great work for the truth” ...**Marlene Dyer, Royal Oak, MI**.

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **Leoni Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is FREE, being supported by the contributions of both individuals and congregations. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3, 2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1 and 2 Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless it is marked “not for publication.” The church building is located at: 2132 Old McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson** — seektheoldpaths.com

LEONI CHURCH OF CHRIST
PO BOX 7506
MCMINNVILLE, TN 37111
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Woodbury, TN
Permit No. 17