



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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ARE MODERN TRANSLATIONS DANGEROUS? #1

Randy Kea

I am not saying we know everything about everything, but there are some things we cannot be wrong about and be right with God.

For a number of years now, one of the greatest threats to the cause of Christ has been the proliferation of modern versions/translations. Let me say at the outset that I do not hold that all modern translations are in the same category as far as errors are concerned. However, I have not run across one that does not have something critical that should be exposed. I maintain that the best (not perfect) translation in English continues to be the **King James Version** (see my recent articles in *Seek The Old Paths*: January-June, 2018. seektheoldpaths.com).

There are four groups of people in the church on this subject:

- 1) Those who believe the truth and understand that modern translations are very dangerous;
- 2) Those who do not believe in verbal inspiration, preservation, and translation, and therefore see nothing wrong with modern-speech translations;
- 3) Those who are indifferent and unconcerned who really don't care to investigate and study the matter;
- 4) Those who have heard the Gospel and believe the Truth but have not informed themselves on this critical issue.

Here are at least four reasons why modern versions/translations should be considered dangerous:

- 1) As a teacher, you cannot teach the Truth if you are using a transla-

tion that promotes **Calvinism, Pentecostalism, Premillennialism, etc.**

- 2) As a student, you cannot learn the Truth through a translation that promotes the above fatal theological errors.
- 3) How can a young person or a new convert become grounded in the Truth by reading and studying a translation promoting the above theological errors?
- 4) If a person has already embraced these errors promoted by a version, how do you bring them out of the error by using an erroneous version?

A number of years ago when my wife was getting her bachelor's degree, she had a fellow student who was a Calvinist. He was convinced of this by using the NIV. She could not teach him the Truth using this version. When she tried to reason with him, he actually showed her out of the NIV in Romans 8-9 the phrase "sinful nature" which of course is an erroneous translation for the Greek word "flesh." I've heard some of my brethren say, "You can teach someone out of any translation." Yes, you can teach them some Truth, but not all of it! One who would make a statement like this either doesn't know the Truth or doesn't believe the Truth. Should we not be concerned about the "whole counsel" of God, "all truth," the totality of the "doctrine of Christ?"

I am not saying we know every-

thing about everything, but there are some things we cannot be wrong about and be right with God. For example, you must be right about the subject of adultery or you cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor 6:9-11). Almost all modern-speech translations allow for more reasons for a divorce and remarriage besides "fornication" which of course would result in adultery (Matt. 5:32; 19:9, etc).

Here are some Bible warnings: "ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it" ... "thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" ... "turn not from it to the right-hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest" ... "add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee and thou be found a liar" ... "all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word" ... "let him speak my word faithfully" ... "but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" ... "for we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God" ... "if any man shall add unto these things...if any man shall take away from the words of the book..." (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Josh. 1:7-10; Prov. 30:6; Jer. 23:28; 26:2; Gal. 1:7; 2 Cor. 2:17; Rev. 22:18-19).

A number of years ago when our children were very young, we were ad-

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Modern Translations...



Editorial...

SOLVING PROBLEMS AMONG BRETHREN #2

Garland M. Robinson

Prayer is a vital part in solving problems. When the seven men had been chosen in Acts 6:6 to take care of the task of serving tables, they were “...set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.” When brethren pray together, great things can be accomplished. Prayer can soothe the tensions and strain of relationships. We petition God’s help through his Word. We must not underestimate the power of prayer.

Jesus prayed often (Luke 3:21; Matt. 14:23; 26:36; Mark 1:35). He tells us to always pray and never be weary (Luke 18:1). We find the apostles doing just that in Acts 6:1-7. They must continue preaching and praying. So should we.

The brethren accepted the proposal set forth by the apostles to solve this threat to their unity. No record exists that the brethren continued to murmur and complain. They all hastened to comply with the solution. The result was that the Word of God increased (6:7). Faith was strengthened. Hurt feelings subsided. Brotherly love continued (cf. Heb. 13:1). People obeyed the Gospel and continued in their walk with the Master. There is no way of knowing the number of those who obeyed the Gospel. The text simply says, “*And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith*” (v.7). Such a condition prevails when unity and peace reigns in our hearts.

Division generates strife and wastes great amounts of energy that could otherwise be spent on advancing the Cause of the Lord. Every moment spent in quarreling, backbiting and devouring one another (cf. Gal. 5:15), multiplies many fold in wasted time that could be used to build, strengthen and support. However, we must still handle problems as they arise.

The seven chosen had to be spiritually minded men to work with those

involved. Their task was to solve the problem among the brethren. McGarvey points out that the seven listed in verse five were Greek names and suggests “the men were selected from the very party whence the murmuring had proceeded.” There was no selfishness shown or partyism exhibited. Both sides trusted these men could and would handle the complaints, which they did in fine fashion. This should serve as a splendid example for us today when problems arise among us.

It is also interesting to note that two of these men, Philip and Stephen, are mentioned later as preachers of the Gospel (Acts 6:9 8:40). Preachers can and should help brethren work through trying times and difficult situations. Each must have a willingness to help and be helped.

As a result of their solving the problem that arose among them and the subsequent unity enjoyed, we read “*and the word of God increased*” (Acts 6:7). This is simply another way of saying that the preaching of the Gospel continued. More and more people had opportunity to hear the unsearchable riches of Christ. The Gospel had its intended effects on the hearts and lives of those who obeyed it. The preaching of the Word was successful.

Notice how it is mentioned of the “word of God” increasing. It is not said that the Holy Spirit operated directly on the hearts of people. Nothing is said of a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. No mention is made of the Holy Spirit coming down and taking control of people’s lives. All of these are foreign expressions to the Holy Bible. However, they are common statements in the lives of many today — those who have been sold the lie of Calvinism. Such people wait for a working of the Holy Spirit to come over them. But, they wait in vain. That’s not the way the Spirit works. He works through His Word. “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*

in all wisdom...” (Col. 3:16).

Biblical terminology and expression is simply, “*the word of God increased.*” As unity prevailed, the Word was preached, people listened, the Word had its affect, people obeyed and lives were changed. This is the same way it is done today.

The word “faith” is used in at least two senses in the Scriptures. To fail to recognize this causes one to err in his understanding and appropriate use of God’s Word.

Sometimes “faith” has reference to **one’s personal faith** such as Hebrews 11:6 where it is said it is impossible to please God without faith; or, Mark 16:16 where Jesus said “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*”

In many other places, the word “faith” is used in **reference to the Gospel** (New Testament Law, cf. Rom. 8:2) which is God’s “system,” “rule” or “law of faith.” It is so used in Acts 13:8, 14:22, 16:5, 24:24, 1 Cor. 16:13, 2 Cor. 13:5, Gal. 1:23, 2:16, 3:23, Eph. 4:5, 13, Jude 3. It is called the “law of faith” in Romans 3:27.

A great many who were among the priests of the Jewish temple worship were “*obedient to the faith*” (Acts 6:7). This is equivalent to saying that they “obeyed the Gospel,” “became Christians” or were “baptized.” All are synonymous terms. Such expressions as this are found on at least two other occasions. “*By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name*” (Rom. 1:5). “*But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith*” (Rom. 16:26).

One obeys the faith by yielding to or complying to its demands. This is simply another way of saying one “obeys the Gospel” such as in Romans 10:16, 2 Thessalonians 1:8 and 1 Peter 4:17. Without obedience to the Faith (the Gospel), one cannot be saved. These verses make clear that the vengeance and wrath of God will fall upon those who “obey not the gospel.”

Obedience to the Gospel involves certain “steps” or “acts” to perform:

1) One must have **faith**, or **belief** in the Gospel and Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of the world (John 8:24; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:37; Heb.

11:6).

2) One must **repent** of all their sins. Repentance is not primarily a changed life. It is a changed mind, attitude, thinking (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30). Changing one’s mind leads and demands a changed life.

3) One must **confess** faith in Jesus that He is the Son of God (Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10).

4) One must be **baptized** (immersed) in water for the remission (forgiveness) of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-6,17-18; 1 Peter 3:21). Water baptism is the new birth of which Jesus spake with Nicodemus (John 3:3-5). Water baptism puts one into the body (church) of the Lord (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13). All who are saved are in the church (Acts 2:41,47). The church is the body of the saved (Eph. 5:23).

5) One must **continue faithful** in the Lord unto death, even if faithfulness costs one their life (Rev. 2:10; Matt. 10:22; 1 Cor. 15:58; Heb. 10:23).

Oh, how we wish we could get brethren to seriously think about their situation and work to correct it. We should make every attempt to be at peace, not only among brethren, but with all men. Paul said, *“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men”* (Rom. 12:18). *“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another”* (Rom. 14:19). *“...Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, **live in peace**; and the God of love and peace shall be with you”* (2 Cor. 13:11). Let us *“...stand fast in **one spirit**, with **one mind striving together** for the faith of the gospel”* (Phil. 1:27). *“...Be at peace among yourselves”* (1 Thess. 5:13). *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”* (Heb. 12:14). *“Let brotherly love continue”* (Heb. 13:1). We must see that we *“...love one another with a pure heart fervently”* (1 Peter 1:22).

Problems will arise, they are inevitable. As a matter of fact, the Lord says they are necessary. Paul told the brethren at Corinth, *“For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you”* (1 Cor. 11:19). Though God does not cause troubles and controversy, He has always used them to “prove” or “test” His people.

This was so in the Old Testament. Israel was warned to not follow false prophets that would lead them to worship other gods. *“Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the **LORD** your God **proveth you**, to know whether ye love the **LORD** your God with all your heart and with all your soul”* (Deut. 13:3; cf. Judges 3:4). It was also true in New Testament days. Jesus said, *“Woe unto the world because of offences! for **it must needs be that offences come**; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh”* (Matt. 18:7; cf. Luke 17:1)!

The best thing to do in respect to problems and controversy among us is to be prepared for it. Don’t think that simply because we are at peace now, we will always be at peace. Controversy and dissensions can arise overnight. Satan has made it his purpose to divide and conquer. He can’t stand it when people are at peace, especially the Lord’s people. Problems come from both outside and inside our ranks. It did so with the first century church (Acts 15:5; 20:30; 24:5; 28:22). It can and will also be so with us.

Work at peace! *“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* (Eph. 4:3). Abraham exemplified this sentiment in Genesis 13:8. *“And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for **we be brethren**.”* Notice the exhortation of our Lord God through the apostle Paul. *“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; **Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful”*** (Col. 3:12-15).

This takes work — arduous, strenuous, rigorous, laborious, difficult, hard work! Are YOU willing to expend that much energy to accomplish the will of God? Will YOU do all within your power to see that it’s done this side of eternity? Will YOUR hands be clean when they lie folded in death? If there be no peace and harmony with another, make sure it is not on your

account. Make sure it is not because you have not done all within your power to bring it about.

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem...” (Psa. 122:6). *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity”* (Psa. 133:1). *“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit”* (1 Cor. 12:12-13).

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THE FRUITS OF THE LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA

Johnny O. Trail

There is a coordinated effort stirring to legalize marijuana in every state within our nation. Numerous states have already legalized the drug and are realizing the magnitude of their actions. One source avers,

Thirty states and the District of Columbia currently have laws broadly legalizing marijuana in some form... Eight states and the District of Columbia have adopted the most expansive laws legalizing marijuana for recreational use. Most recently, sales of recreational-use marijuana in California kicked off on January 1. In Massachusetts, retail sales of cannabis are expected to start later this year in July. Voters in Maine similarly approved a ballot measure legalizing marijuana in 2016.¹

Just because something is legalized does not mean it is good or even positive for our society and morals. The same is true in regards to Christian morality. Isaiah 5:20 says, *“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”*

A glaring example of the aforementioned principle would be the legalization of alcohol. When one considers all of the evils associated with alcohol consumption, it becomes easy to see how detrimental legalization of that substance has been. Broken lives, destroyed marriages, and wrecked families characterize people who have succumbed to the idol of alcoholism.

A recent article in *The Denver Post* supports the conclusion that many argued before the legalization of marijuana. That is, legalization of marijuana will create social, legal, and moral problems. The article cites the following facts:

The number of marijuana-related automobile fatalities in Colorado, as measured by the drug’s chief psychoactive ingredient, hit 77 in 2016, the latest in a series of sharp increases in recent years. Fifty-one of those drivers had levels of that substance, called Delta 9 THC, above the threshold for

cannabis impairment under Colorado law.²

The state of Washington had similar results after marijuana was legalized. Consider the following quote:

The Washington Traffic Safety Commission released an analysis of blood tests from drivers involved in fatal accidents. Before the legalization of marijuana, about half of such blood samples had active THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. The new study found 85 percent of blood samples had THC.³

In addition to creating problems on our highways, marijuana has other negative effects on the human body. People using marijuana typically have a short attention span and lack the ability to perform tasks that require multiple steps. Moreover, marijuana cigarettes have significantly more particulates (tar) than tobacco. “[M]arijuana smoke is usually inhaled longer and more deeply than cigarette smoke, delivering up to four times more tar to the lungs.”⁴ Consider the following facts:

- Marijuana causes short term memory loss.
- It inflames the lungs and may contribute to lung cancer.
- It can create an acute panic reaction in stronger doses.
- It creates anxiety in its users.
- It can trigger schizophrenia in certain individuals.
- It is a drug that creates dependency for its users.
- It causes impairment in decision-making situations.
- Withdrawal symptoms include irritability, restlessness, decreased appetite, sleep disturbance, sweating, tremors, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- It causes an increased heart rate that can cause heart attack.
- It causes a reddening of the eyes.
- It causes blurred vision and headaches.
- It causes decreased fertility in women.
- It also causes decreased sexual drive in men.⁵

Suffice it to say, God wants Christians to monitor the substances that

he puts into his body. First Corinthians 6:19-20 says, *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

At this juncture, some individuals wanting to defend the legalization of marijuana (or any other illicit substance for that manner) will throw out a straw man argument.⁶ They might say, “Well, if this is the case, what about that cholesterol laden hamburger you just ate. You are not taking care of your body — you big hypocrite.” There is a huge difference between smoking a substance that is harmful to one’s self and others in an immediate manner verses the cumulative effects of poor diet choices. While we do need to take care of our physical bodies, the comparisons are not equal.

It is also incumbent to acknowledge that marijuana does have some legitimate medical uses. However, these therapeutic uses have been difficult to determine. MacFadden and Woody aver,

With repeated smoking, patients may be expected to experience the typical symptoms of intoxication, such as mood changes and decreases in concentration, coordination, and the ability to estimate time. Separating the undesired side effects of cannabis from its therapeutic effects has been difficult.⁷

Legitimate medical uses for marijuana do exist, but it is a far cry from legalization for recreational uses. The chemicals within marijuana that have medicinal value can be extracted and used in a non-smoking, non-intoxicating form. “Because of the development of synthetic cannabinoid compounds with fewer intoxicating qualities and concerns over the potential harmfulness of marijuana, in 1992 the U.S. government stopped accepting participants in its medicinal marijuana program, which, for some 15 years, had been supplying government-grown marijuana to patients suffering from cancer, glaucoma, and AIDS.”⁸

These legitimate uses should not be used to argue for complete and total legalization of marijuana. First Thessalonians 5:21-22 says, *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.”*

ENDNOTES:

[1] Governing: The States and Localities (2018). “State Marijuana Laws in 2018 Map.” <http://www.governing.com/gov-data/state-marijuana-laws-map-medical-recreational.html>.

[2] Aguilar, John (2018). “As Colorado auto deaths involving marijuana rise, CDOT is asking thousands how they feel about driving under pot’s influence.” The Denver Post. <https://www.denverpost.com/2018/03/25/colorado-auto-deaths-marijuana-use/>.

[3] Smith, Warren Cole (2015). “Going to Pot?” World Magazine. http://www.worldmag.com/2015/10/going_to_pot/page.

[4] MacFadden, Wayne, and Woody, George E. (2000). “Cannabis-Related Disorders,” Kaplan and Sadock’s Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry, Vol. 1, 7th ed. Benjamin and Virginia

Sadock, eds.

[5] Grilly, David M. (2006). *Drugs and Human Behavior*, 5th ed. Pearson, A and B, Boston, 256-278.

[6] A straw man is a fallacy in which an opponent’s argument is overstated or misrepresented in order to be attacked or refuted

[7] Ibid.

[8] Grilly, David M. (2006). *Drugs and Human Behavior*, 5th ed. Pearson, A and B, Boston.

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THE CHURCH AND PRESENT TRENDS

Bob Patterson

As a rule, most parents want things to be better for their children than it was for them. As we think about it, each member must recognize that the church’s strength today will help provide for the church’s strength tomorrow. Thus, there is the need for every member to be what God would have him to be and to do what God would have him to do. Every area of obligation, responsibility, and privilege in serving God must be characterized by our giving all diligence and adding to our faith *“virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Peter 1:5-8). In obeying God, performing well in the work, worship, and service that God demands, we have every reason to expect that the next generation will be benefitted by our efforts.

The basis of our concern is in knowing what can happen in one generation’s time! Judges 2:10 says, *“And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers; and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.”* Knowing what can take place in one generation, we had better do our very best! Let’s consider some current trends we are facing. If these trends continue, WE ARE CONCERNED THAT THE CHURCH IN THE FUTURE...

1. Will be made up of primarily older members! Obviously, because to them, God is not a high priority, we are losing many of our young people (Eccl. 12:1). Older saints are truly a blessing, but let us remember that God has so

designed His will for man that every accountable being can respond obediently, and begin to live by that inspired rule and grow up in faithful service! As parents, let us teach our children that ‘youth’ is the time to remember and begin to serve God (Ecc. 12:1; Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15).

2. Will be hurting in the area of leadership! In many places the church will not have elders and will not have much prospect of having elders in the future. Sad to say, many elderships today are filled with men who either do not possess the qualifications that God has given (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), or they do not have any concept of the work that God has placed upon them (Titus 1:9-11; 1 Tim. 3:2; Acts 20:28-31; Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-15; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Eph. 4:11-16; James 5:13-16). There are also many attacks against elderships by some who are unwilling to be submissive and obedient to those men charged with the watch-care of their souls (Heb. 13:17). Thus, there is not very much appeal for men to desire this work!

3. Will have little (if any) discipline! To many, the idea of fellowship is absolutely meaningless, making the “discipline” that is often involved meaningless as well! All manner of misconduct is virtually overlooked (or tolerated) without consequences. We dare not neglect this area of responsibility (1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:1-9; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Thess. 3:6,14-15; Titus 3:10-11). Discipline ignored for years usually means discipline ignored permanently!

4. Will have homes which are unscriptural, or if not unscriptural, homes which are virtually powerless as far as having and demonstrating a godly influence! We are already well aware of the fact that marriage-divorce-remarriage has crippled

the church. I was personally told by an elder (concerning a couple in an unscriptural relationship where I was working at the time), “Bob, How can you be so sure? After all, the scholars disagree among themselves!” Can any doubt what direction this kind of thinking will lead the church toward? Jesus, the master teacher, was very plain in the area of marriage, divorce, and remarriage (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12). Beyond that problem, there are many other areas of concern relating to the family which are being ignored (Eph. 5; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; Titus 2:1-8; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

5. Will replace New Testament truth and work, opting instead to please and entertain the membership! Should we be surprised? I mean, after all, one who is ignorant of the truth is not going to call for a return to the “old paths, where is the good way” (cf. Jer. 6:16) because he does not know any better. Likewise, the same will be true concerning various areas of work because one must go to the Word of God in order to be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:17). Minus the Bible, ears will be tickled (2 Tim. 4:3-4), the church will no longer be “holding forth the word of life” (Phil. 2:16), fun will be the order of the day, and souls will be lost (2 Cor. 4:3)!

I sincerely hope that we will consider these points of concern. I am very much aware of the fact that what has been outlined here is characteristic of many congregations of the Lord’s church today. Brethren, we must *“give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip”* (Heb. 2:1).

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I LOVE SPORTS

Roger D. Campbell

Not everyone is “into” sports. In truth, neither enjoying sports, nor finding them uninteresting, makes one more spiritual or more faithful in the Lord’s service.

Some sports bore me. I have zero interest in participating in them or watching others play them. But when it comes to other sports, I am a confessed lover of them.

I love sports, BUT...

- **I never want to become a person who loves pleasure more than loving God.** God’s word says, “...In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be **lovers of their own selves**, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, **lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God**” (2 Tim. 3:1-4).
- **I do not want to think more about sports than I do about heaven.** “For 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**” (2 Cor. 5:1-2).
- **I do not want to talk more about sports than I do about Jesus and His Gospel.** “...Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and **preached Christ unto them**. ... Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and **preached unto him Jesus**” (Acts 8:5,35).
- **I do not want to spend more time reading about sports than I do reading God’s word.** Upon hearing the Gospel, the people in Berea “...were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all

readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures daily**, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). The Psalmist wrote, “O how love I thy law! it [is] my meditation all the day” (Psa. 119:97,113,163).

- **I never intend to forsake the assembling of the saints in order to attend or watch a sport.** “Not **forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:25).
- **I do not want to be described by others as one who “eats, drinks, and sleeps” sports.** “...Seek those **things which are above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection **on things above**, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:1-2).
- **I do not want to get so worked up over sports that I become obnoxious or cannot function.** “Finally, [be ye] all of one mind, having **compassion** one of another, **love as brethren**, [be] pitiful, [be] **courteous**. Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord [are] over the righteous, and his ears [are open] unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord [is] against them that do evil” (1 Peter 3:8-12).
- **I do not want my references to sports to be a distraction to others during worship services.** “God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD” (Psa. 122:1).

- **I have no intention of spending more money on sports than I contribute to my God.** “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, [so let him give]; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).
- **I have no intention of having a falling out with a saint who cheers for my team’s biggest rival.** “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” (Luke 6:31). “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, [even] in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal. 5:14).
- **I refuse to allow sports to become an idol, a stumbling-block that will keep me out of heaven.** “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and **covetousness, which is idolatry**” (Col. 3:5). “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also [do] ye. And above all these things [put on] charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful” (Col. 3:12-15).

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The Lord Jesus knows all things because he is God. God the Father declared that all men “hear him” and no other (Matt. 17:5). The demons knew who he was (Mark 1:24). The centurion confessed him (Matt. 27:54). He sees us and knows our thoughts (John 1:48; 16:30; Heb. 4:12-13). No one can hide from him.

YOU CAN'T JUST SIT!

Wayne A. Dixon

In Numbers 32:1-5 we read of a request presented to Moses by two of the tribes of Israel. The tribes of Gad and Reuben, and (as we later learn in verse 33) half of the tribe of Manasseh, asked that they be allowed to stay on the east side of the Jordan (Num. 32:5). Verse one of this text tells us this was a good place for cattle, of which they had many.

After hearing their request, Moses responds, "...*Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here*" (Num. 32:6)? He rebukes them for their indifference and accuses them of discouraging the other nine and one-half tribes (Num. 32:7). He proceeds to give them a history lesson (vs.8-13) of the similar half-heartedness of the ten spies which caused discouragement and disobedience with a resulting forty year punishment in the wilderness. Moses then reminds them (Num. 32:14-15) that their request, as stated, will result once again in a wilderness wandering as well as "*ye shall destroy all this people*" (Num. 32:15). Numbers 32:15-33 are conditions proposed by these two and one-half tribes agreed to by Moses (v.33).

After the death of Moses, Joshua reiterates the previous agreement between the tribes of Gad, Reuben and one-half of Manasseh and Moses which is recorded in Joshua 1:12-18. This occurs as the actual crossing of the Jordan is about to take place.

There are several lessons from this study for us today that will increase our faith (Rom 10:17).

First, *conditions were required*. The two and one-half tribes had to provide armed troops to participate in the battle (Num. 32:20; Josh. 4:12-13). Furthermore, they had to continue in the battle "*Until he hath driven out his enemies before him. And the land be subdued before the Lord: then afterward ye shall return*" (Num. 32:21-22). Moses reminded them that disobedience would not go unnoticed. "*But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out*" (Num. 32:23).

Likewise, *our salvation is conditional*. We can only enter our promised land (heaven) by being obedient to the Gospel which requires us to **Hear** (Rom. 10:14-17), **Believe** (John 8:24), **Repent** (Luke 13:3), **Confess** (Rom. 10:9-10) and be **Baptized** (Acts 2:38).

Just as Moses told the two and one-half tribes they could not just sit (Num. 32:6), after becoming Christians we can not just sit! We also have to be doers. "*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*" (James 1:22). We must actively engage in the daily fight with the devil. By inspiration, James makes it crystal clear that "faith without works" is dead and tells us so three times (James 2:17,20,26).

Unlike the Israelites and their physical battle, ours is one of a spiritual nature and our "sword" is God's word. "*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God*" (Eph. 6:17). With this sword (God's word), we are admonished to take a stand in accordance with God's word (Eph. 6:13-14).

If we will be obedient, God will not forsake us. He told Joshua this very thing specifically in the last three words of Joshua 1:5 when he said, "*I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*" as long as they followed the conditions of verses 7-8. He tells us the same thing today as we read in the last phrase of Hebrews 13:5, "*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*" The conditions for our access to an eternal heavenly home are also based on our obedience to God's will for us today, which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Just as Moses reminded the Israelites that their sins would be uncovered, likewise, we face the same fate, "*For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ*" (Rom. 14:10).

Won't you be obedient today? After all, this is all that God has required since the Garden of Eden. Also, let us never forget that his burden is light, "*For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light*" (Matt. 11:30).

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Modern Translations...

(Continued from page 49)

vised to make a will (a last will and testament), which is good advice. As time has gone by, we have changed that will to adapt it to changing circumstances in our lives. At the point of our death our will legally cannot be changed. It will be enforced by the power of constituted civil law. We would be very distressed if someone obtained a copy of our will and started adding words or taking away words or modifying it in any way. Just one word can make a huge difference in the probation process of a will.

Please note this passage with reference to Jesus and His will: "*And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth*" (Heb. 9:15-17).

While our Lord was on earth during His earthly ministry, He distributed His blessings as He pleased. But at the time of His death, He repealed the Old Testament and ratified His New Testament. Since that time, blessings can only be obtained from the Lord by complying with the terms of His last will and testament (Matt. 26:28; 2 Cor. 3:6-18; Col. 2:14-16; Heb. 13:20).

If we, as mere humans, would not want anyone to tamper with our last will and testament, not even a word of it, what do you think the Lord feels when men change any of His words in any way? The double curse of Galatians 1:6-9 will be brought to bear on the Day of Judgment upon those who would engage in such a nefarious business (John 12:48).

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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