

August 28, 2022

Viewpoint from the Valley Grove Church Of Christ

Closet Convictions

By Dan Shipley

John 12:42-43 says: *“Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, 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.”* From its beginning, the cause of Christ has suffered because of disciples with closet convictions; the kind of men who know and believe the truth but will not stand up for it. Consider, for example, these influential rulers of our text. Potentially, their worth to the cause of their un-confessed Christ was immeasurable; effectively, however, they contributed absolutely nothing. Worse, their influence remained where they did, as must always be the case. What a testimonial to the tremendous swaying power of cowardice and pride! It keeps them among those whom they oppose and puts them in opposition to their own faith and convictions. “But after all”, they may have reasoned, “we do have our standing in the community to think about.” And, besides, how could we ever explain to our friends of the synagogue circle about what we really believe? Why, what would they think?” So goes people-pleasing

religion.

And so stay the people-pleasers in religion — in their “synagogues” of compromise and out of God’s kingdom. But most of them do not see their “going along” as being all that serious, let alone as jeopardizing salvation. For example, it is not unusual to meet denominationalists who freely admit certain unscriptural practices espoused by their church, but will not speak out against them. They know and believe certain Bible truths, but will not practice them, for fear....? Now, what is the essential difference between these and the elders of our text? Is it less honorable to deny Christ than His word? The false idea that men can honor Christ while ignoring, perverting and desecrating His doctrine is of the devil! “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (Jn. 12:48). Man’s part in gaining a right standing with God lies in his knowing, believing, and obeying of gospel truth (Jn. 6:45; 8:32; Mk. 16:16; Rom. 6:17; James 1:21-22). Every right relationship with God is a truth determined relationship! All that God requires of man and all that man can ever do to

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please and glorify God is made known in His word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Jn. 9). He who shuns it, compromises it, or adds to it reflects on the God who gave it (1 Thess. 4:13), whether Jew, denominationalist or Christian.

In recent years, many members of the church of Christ have “awakened” to find themselves in “synagogues” of liberalism. They share the dilemma of the rulers to some extent. “Shall we speak out and risk being put out — or shall we go along to get along?” May God help them to see the seriousness and importance of standing up for the Lord by standing for His truth. To continue “going along” is to continue violating conscience and fellowshiping error. Friend, your influence is where you are. Demonstrate your allegiance to Christ and His truth while you can!



One Sinner Destroys Much Good

By Ron Daly

The title of this article comes from a statement of the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes in chapter 9, verse 18. It conveys a thought that each of us must consider. It tells us that a sinner wields a lot of influence, but it is the wrong kind and it is destructive! Notice that the text doesn't say that “many sinners destroy much good,” but “one sinner destroys much good.” Many times one sinner does more harm to the cause of good, than one righteous person does to a stampeding herd of ungodliness. A preacher may be a very effective pulpiteer and he may have a firm grasp on the truth of scripture, but if he doesn't believe what he preaches enough to live it, he is himself a sinner who destroys any good that he achieves (1 Tim. 4:11-12).

An elder may have tremendous leadership skills coupled with a broad knowledge of God's word, but if he doesn't practice what he requires about honesty, controlling the tongue, moral purity, and all else, he isn't fit for the position of overseer. He will destroy any good that he accomplishes (1 Tim. 5:20; Tit. 1 :7).

A bible class teacher may be kind, knowledgeable, and very practical in his application of scripture, but if he is a gossip, quick tempered, listens to slander, and never asks forgiveness from those against whom he has sinned, any good that he accomplishes will be destroyed by his sins (Rom. 2:19-24). If one hundred people obey the gospel every week and gather for worship and if they see people in the assembly who also claim to be Christians, but frequent drug houses, strip clubs, bars, prostitution and gambling houses, receive and conceal stolen property, and swindle others out of their belongings, any good

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that is accomplished by the congregation will be destroyed (Heb. 10:26-29). We should promote good instead of destroying it. If our lives are not what God says they should be we are destroying the good that we or other saints seem to be achieving. We must repent of our sins and start anew. Grieving in sin isn't the answer. We've got to get over the "self-pity complex." If there is sin in your life, stop it and turn to God. Then and only then will the good that we and others are trying to do will not be destroyed.



The Perfect Law Of Liberty

By Cecil Willis

The New Testament writer, James, said, *"But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing"* (James 1:25). There are several important lessons to be learned from this passage.

(1) It is a "law." This body of truth which is the source of all pure religion is here called a "law." There are some who would have us to believe that the Old Testament had law, but no grace; and that the New Testament has grace, but no law. They therefore teach that we should preach "the Man" but not "the Plan," else we become legalists.

However, a law is simply a "rule of action." If there is no prescribed rule of action (i.e., no law), then it would be impossible to sin, since sin is the transgression of the law (1 Jno. 3:4). The body of truth that guides us is elsewhere called the "law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:2 1), the "law of the Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:1-2), and here it is called "the law of liberty" (James 1:25; 2:12). It is true, however, that we are not under the law of Moses (Rom. 6:14), but this does not mean that, we are under no law at all.

(2) It is "the perfect law." It is the only "perfect law." The law of Moses had some imperfections, the Hebrew writer says (Heb. 8:7, 8). The law of Moses could not take away sins (Heb. 9:15; 10:1-4). But the gospel is "the perfect law." There will be no other law like it given forever (Matt. 24:35). "Perfect" means "completeness," "fullness," or "wholeness." In this gospel "all truth" for all time was revealed (Jn. 16:13). Jude taught that the faith was "once for all" revealed (Jude 3). Thus this "perfect law" cannot be amended, improved, or transcended by man. Any tampering at all by man, whether to add to it or to take from it, will destroy its perfection. It must be left just as it is to maintain its perfection.

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(3) It is “the law of liberty.”

The law of Moses constituted an unbearable yoke (Acts 15:10). When the gospel was inaugurated, the “yoke of bondage” was removed. Jesus taught, “ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jno. 8:32). Paul taught the “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death” (Rom. 8:2). The power of the gospel to liberate one from the tyranny of sin is another mark of its perfection. The gospel is God’s only power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).

The fact that the gospel is “the law of liberty” does not mean that one is free so that he does not have to obey the gospel. Some teach that since the gospel is a liberating gospel, one does not necessarily have to obey that gospel; he does not have to believe and be baptized, we are told. But the only way we really can honor “the Man” is to obey “the Plan.” When one is baptized “in the name of” Jesus Christ, he shows his faith in the saving power of Christ. It is only when one has obeyed that this “perfect law” becomes to him “the law of liberty” (Rom. 6:17).

Visitors — We pray that you benefit spiritually from our worship together and hope to see you again.

September Birthdays: The 18th Van Hinds.

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Sunday

Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.

Worship 10:30 A.M.

Worship 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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