

January 19, 2020

Viewpoint from the **Valley Grove Church Of Christ**

Religious Pragmatism

By Greg Gwin

Occasionally, especially when discussing politics, we'll hear someone described as a "pragmatist." What this means is that the fella's main operating rule is "do whatever it takes." His standard for judging whether a thing is good or not is: "Does it work?" All that matters to him is getting the desired result — it doesn't matter how he gets it. If he gets re-elected, if his campaign contributions keep coming in, then everything is "good." Never mind that promises have been broken, questionable tactics employed, even laws violated. The pragmatist isn't concerned with such details and technicalities.

There is clearly a growing trend toward pragmatism in religion. It is that philosophy which says "the end justifies the means." All around us we see the signs of it. Many denominations have been following this approach for decades. Now, even among churches of Christ we see it. Some of our brethren have become completely consumed in the quest for "results."

We all want to see the church grow. We long to see lost souls converted. How can we achieve these goals? The pragmatist says "do whatever it takes." If this means changing the scripturally authorized work and worship of the church, he is willing to do so. Go ahead, add instrumental music — people like it, and even expect it, so let's have it. Let women take a leading role in preaching and conducting the services — after all, this is the trend in the world, and we've got to adjust to it if we want to "keep up." And, we need to add recreation and entertainment to draw the young people; social services to entice people with special "needs," etc., etc.

There's no stopping place for the religious pragmatist. As he continues his work we will see the church go farther and farther away from the truth taught in God's word. Instead of pragmatism, we need to demand a "thus saith the Lord" for all we do and teach (Col. 3:17).

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

Right Attitudes For Faithfulness

By Warren Berkley

It is clear to every Bible student, you cannot be faithful to the Lord if your attitude is not in keeping with the teachings of Christ (Phil. 2:5; Col. 3:17). Attitude has to do with the content of your mind, your disposition and the control you exercise over your emotions.

The simple truth is, the New Testament is loaded with teaching, examples, prohibitions and warnings about attitude. This spiritually healthy instruction should be the basis of our discipline over our mind. Your attitude toward God is basic. All other phases of attitude are rooted in your attitude toward God. We must hold Him in the highest esteem, revere Him, worship Him and obey Him with wholehearted love and trust (Eccl. 5:1,2; Matt. 22:37; Rom. 12:1,2; Prov. 1:7).

Once your attitude toward God begins to weaken, all other phases of attitude will likely deteriorate. Let us be aware of this and constantly monitor our attitude toward God, seeking to enrich our relationship with Him. Your attitude toward Christ is a component of your attitude toward God. If God is your father, you will love His Son (Jn. 8:42). If you love God and want to obey Him, you will have a favorable and grateful acceptance of His Son, Jesus Christ. You will regard Him as the perfect expression of deity and humanity, the spotless Son of God who died in order for you to be free from sin and enjoy eternal life. Likewise, you will read and study about His attitude with the highest esteem, seeking to imitate Him in all your behavior.

Your attitude toward others develops out of your reverence for Deity. If you believe in God and follow His Son, your behavior toward others will be based on that. You will seek to do all God has said about how to treat people. You will study and follow the compassion of Christ, as well as His boldness in seeking to save the lost. His relationship to others becomes your pattern (see 1 Pet. 2:18-25).

Your attitude toward other members of God's family will be suitable, in keeping with all that is written about such relationships. Peter teaches God's people to "love one another fervently with a pure heart," (1 Pet. 1:22), and John taught extensively that "we should love one another," (1 John 3:11). "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you," (Eph. 4:32).

Our attitude must endeavor to follow the pattern of unselfish humility demonstrated by our Lord (Phil. 2:1-5). Your attitude toward sin will be fitting.

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To remain right with God, it is necessary to maintain an abhorrence of sin (Rom. 12:9). If you court the favor of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God (Jas. 4:4). It is essential to arm yourself with “the same mind” or attitude Jesus had against sin and error (1 Pet. 4:10).

Your attitude toward life should be realistic and godly, not bitter and angry. If you murmur and complain about your life, and this becomes your habitual attitude — you cannot be what you should be! And when you get to this low state, you need to stop and recognize that the devil has seduced and maneuvered you into this state of constant anger and

resentment. While you remain in this mood you cannot develop the love described in 1 Cor. 13:4-7, and you cannot grow and taste the kindness of the Lord (1 Pet. 2:1-3).

In the “beatitudes” (Matt. 5:3-12), the Lord addresses every phase or direction of attitude: Your attitude toward God (poor in spirit & hungering and thirsting after righteousness), your attitude toward yourself (meek), your attitude toward others (merciful), your attitude toward those who oppose you (vss. 10-13), and your attitude toward sin (mourn and purity in heart). Growth and faithfulness depends upon the constant development of these qualities.

True Repentance

By Jim King

Repentance means to change your mind, do an about-face, to change direction. In the context of salvation, it refers to changing one’s mind about sinning, turning from sin, and turning to God. It is prompted by a guilty conscience (Acts 2:37-38) and is attainable through the goodness and kindness of God (Rom. 2:4). But for repentance to be accepted by God, it must be genuine and sincere. It is here that I fear Christians sometimes abuse repentance.

It is possible, for example, to use repentance as an escape hatch for “planned sinning.” That is, a Christian might knowingly commit sin, thinking that they can “always repent later.” Or, one can go through the motions of repenting, without understanding or intending to comply with the changed life which it demands. After all, repentance has fruit, John the Baptist said (Matt. 3:8). Peter commanded his hearers to “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out. . .” (Acts 3:19). And Paul told Agrippa that he “preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds” (Acts 26:20).

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Any prayer to God for forgiveness which leaves a mental loophole for continued sinning is no repentance at all. Such mental finagling is an attempt to mock God, which Paul says cannot be done (Gal. 6:7). Have you really changed your mind about your sin, or are you trying to have it both ways? Remember, the Lord already knows the answer.

Wash Your Face

By Leslie Diestelkamp

When you see a dirty face in the mirror, you wash your face, not the mirror. Likewise when we see error in our lives, portrayed by truth revealed in the Bible, let us simply clean up our lives and quit criticizing the Bible.

What do you think of a man who breaks a mirror because he doesn't like what he sees? Then what do you think of one who criticizes the truth that simply reveals the inner man that we can't see with the physical eye?

Study Your Bible

January Birthdays:

The 17th Bonnie Brown; the 22nd Jennifer Collins; The 23rd Paula Brown; the 25th Jacqueline Pryor; the 25th David Justice; the 27th Johnny Little; the 28th George Malone; the 29th James Brown.

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Valley Grove Church Of Christ
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P. O. Box 461
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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.

Phone: 662-342-1132

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