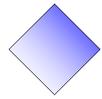




The Voice of Truth



September 10, 2017

THE BIBLE IS THE BLUEPRINT FOR HUMAN CONDUCT

BY JIMMY PETTIGREW

The word of God, the scriptures, offers to mankind principles to help them make decisions in all areas of human conduct. For many years, atheistic, pagan philosophers have assumed the duty to teach what they feel is right for human conduct. *"Every man did that which was right in his own eyes"* (**Judges 21:25**). These men have failed every time because they have failed to consider what God has said in His words on a given conduct pattern. *"They have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?"* (**Jeremiah 8:9**). *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death"* (**Proverbs 14:12**). The Bible offers a clear voice, and throws light on how we are to live.

Listen carefully: there can be no morality without God! Why? Because God is the absolute standard of good (**Matthew 19:17; 1 John 1:5; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalms 147:17; Isaiah 45:19; Hosea 9:11; Habakkuk 1:13**). We are told that the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared unto all men, *"teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"* (**Titus 2:11-12**). Peter added: *"According as his divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue"* (**2 Peter 1:3**). Man cannot know right and wrong by reasoning on his own: *"O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (**Jeremiah 10:23**). *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"* (**Isaiah 55:8-9**).

The world about us makes little effort to follow the blueprint of the word of God. People have rejected God's standard. We are living in a time when little attention is given to the word of God and much attention is given to doing what pleases the desire of men. Many have no regard for the moral teachings of the Bible. There is simply

too much of "Hell" in the world today. The sinful world has always condoned evil practices, such as dancing, immodest dress, profanity, gambling, fornication, and the use of alcohol. We must return to the teaching of God's standard found in His word (**Galatians 5:19-21**). It must be taught what God has said about the sins of adultery, homosexuality, fornication, immodesty, drinking and any form of loose living. People believe they have the right to act as they wish. Wrong! What we do in word or deed we are to do all in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ (**Colossians 3:17**). *"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy"* (**1 Peter 1:16**).

The word of God provides us with righteousness (**Proverbs 14:34; Psalms 33:12**). *"Every word of God is pure"* (**Proverbs 30:5**). There is a standard of behavior that God expects men to follow, and it's in His word, the blueprint of human conduct. All men everywhere need to return to the wholesome purity Jesus stressed in **Matthew 5:8**. God's word is man's light, lamp and path (**Psalm 119:105**); it is man's hope against sin (**Psalm 119:11**); it sanctifies (**John 17:17**); it cleanses (**Ephesians 5:26**); it gives us understanding (**Psalms 119:130**); it has the power to produce godliness (**2 Peter 1:3**); to produce a new life (**James 1:18; Romans 6:17-18**).

Notice what Ezekiel told the children of Israel, *"And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean"* (**Ezekiel 44:23**). God's word does that for us today; it is our blueprint for human conduct. The Bible moral code is wonderfully practical; every moral rule that God has given is for our good. The gospel changes the heart or thinking; the mind is renewed (**Romans 12:1-2**).

Man is incapable of directing his steps in life. The Israelites had attempted to direct their lives; they had forsaken God's way: the result is captivity! The scriptures must

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be the foundation of any moral restoration. The Bible

alone is our answer! It is past high time that God's morality found its way back into the lives of men and women. ♦

"BELIEVING IN GOD OR BELIEVING GOD?"

BY JARROD JACOBS

There is a difference in believing in God and believing God. Many today claim to believe in God, saying that they are aware that One greater than themselves has made this world. However, there are few who truly believe God. If people believed God, we would not face so many of the problems we are facing today. Please consider the following

Adam And Eve

Consider Adam and Eve; two people who walked and talked with God (**Gen. 2-3**). They were fully aware of Him, and aware of His will (**Gen. 2:15-17**). In fact, Eve knew God's will so well, that she repeated it to the serpent (**Gen. 3:2-3**). God's will was easily understood and easily followed. The problem came when Satan convinced her to eat of the tree forbidden to her and Adam (**Gen. 3:4-5**). In eating of this tree, she forsook God's will and followed her own. So did Adam (**Gen. 3:6**). Thus, the beginning of sin in the world.

In sinning, they stopped believing God. If they had believed God, they would not have succumbed to the temptation put before them by Satan; for they would have believed God's warnings (**Gen. 2:17**). How many of us fall into this same trap? We are fully aware and know what God's will is, yet we continue to sin, and many times commit the same sin over and over. Truly, there is a difference in knowing and believing. We know God's will and the consequences, and yet we do not believe. If we believed, we would not yield to the temptation placed before us by Satan.

David And Bathsheba

The account in II Samuel 11 of David's sin with Bathsheba is a good example of one not believing God. Would we think for a moment that David was not aware of the Ten Commandments? That David had never heard, "*Thou shalt not commit adultery*," or "*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife*" (**Ex. 20:14, 17**)? Would anyone believe that David never knew that God had said, "*You shall not murder*" (**Ex. 20:13, NKJ**)? He was aware of what God had said. However, he did not believe he would face the consequences. If he did, he would never have done what he did, subjecting his family, the nation, as well as a newborn

babe to the dire consequences of his actions.

Other Examples

Consider Billy Graham for a moment. After all his years of preaching, can we honestly think he has never read **Mark 16:16**, or **Acts 2:38**? Do we honestly think that others of his ilk are unaware of such passages? Then, why is it that they do not teach what the Bible teaches on baptism? Why is it that these folks do not teach the truth about the one true church (**Eph. 4:4**; **Col. 1:18**; **Rom. 16:16**), and instead say, "Join the church of your choice"? The answer is simple: They do not believe God. If they did, they would stop teaching their opinions in opposition to the Scripture (**Matt. 15:8-9**)!

Unfortunately, these people are not the only ones doing it. Some of our brethren are teaching false things! Consider those who say that whatever the individual can do, the church can do. This is contradictory to passages as **I Timothy 5:16**, and **Matthew 18:15-17** that show that the individual and the church are not the same. Obviously, they do not believe what the Lord said, or they would not teach such a doctrine!

Some teach false doctrine on the marriage and divorce question. There are those teaching that the put-away fornicator may remarry. Others broaden the scope, and teach that anyone divorced for any reason may remarry if they so choose. What about **Matthew 5:32** and **19:9**? Are these passages not in their Bibles? Certainly they are. They have just refused to believe them!

Other false teachings are creeping into the church. Many of these false teachings are the same things that have been practiced among those who are not members of the Lord's body for years. All the while, these same people proclaim loud and long their faith in the Lord. Saying we have faith in God is one thing, but showing it is something else entirely (**Jas. 2:17-18**).

Conclusion

Paul said, "*But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*" (**Rom.**

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10:16). In this passage, we find faith and obedience forever joined together. One cannot truly obey until he not only believes in God's existence, but also believes the "report" (i.e., the gospel, God's word). I am sure that every-

one reading this article believes in God. The question is: Do we believe God?? Remember: **James 2:17-18**. Unfortunately, this is a problem we will face until the end of time. The question is, how will we handle it? Do we believe God?

Credit: The Old Paths - 10/17/2010 ♦

"BEHOLD, I THOUGHT..."

BY J. WILEY ADAMS

2 Kings 5 is a classic account of man's wisdom versus the wisdom of God. In **Isaiah 55:8-9**, we learn that God's thoughts and ways are not man's thoughts and ways. His thoughts and ways are higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth. What may seem right to man is not the criterion for pleasing God (**Prov. 14:12**).

In the earlier days of this century, gospel meeting sermons used to include such basic topics as why we sing but do not play, strange fire, the comparison of the Old and New Testaments, morality, and nearly every preacher had a sermon on Naaman, the leper. Under such preaching the stories of the Bible came alive. Brethren were well-taught. Even the children sat speechless at the Bible accounts of Noah and the ark, David and Goliath, as well as the wise man and the foolish man. It has changed but it needs to be revived.

Such a subject has been assigned to this writer for this special issue. It is about Naaman, the leper reported in **2 Kings 5**. No one ever preached it better than the late Fred Dennis of the upper Ohio Valley. I can hear him now as he preached the plain and simple story of the need to let God have His way—the need to obey Him rather than man.

Naaman was the captain of the Syrian host. He was the Syrian king's chief-of-staff. He was a great, honorable and brave man. At times he fought against Israel and took captives from among them. One of these captives was a little maid who waited on Naaman's wife.

It was discovered that Naaman had the dreaded disease called leprosy. He was a leper. He sought desperately to find a cure. He was willing to try anything to get well. When the little maid from Israel knew that her master had leprosy, she told her mistress there was a prophet in Samaria (Elisha) who could heal him. The king of Syria heard of this possibility and told him to go with a letter from him to the king of Israel. He sent many gifts to get on the good side of him and he in effect demanded that he be healed. This nearly scared the king of Israel to death. He thought the king of Syria was trying to pick a fight with him. He tore his clothes in frustration. He said, "*Am I God to kill and*

make alive?" No one had ever been healed of leprosy before (see **Luke 4:27**).

But when Elisha, the man of God, heard the king of Israel had torn his clothes in despair he said, "*Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.*"

So, this important man and all his company came to Elisha's door. Normal courtesy was not extended. After all, this man was an enemy of Israel. Instead of asking him into his house or going out to roll out the red carpet for him, the prophet sent a messenger with the simple message to dip seven times in the Jordan river and he would be healed of his leprosy. Sometimes we tell people we don't like to jump in the lake. It may have sounded like that to Naaman. He was outraged. He said in his wrath, "*Behold I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.*"

What a simple thing the prophet had required of him to do. He took issue about the superiority of the rivers of Syria over the muddy Jordan. His pride was badly injured. He either had to get rid of his pride or his leprosy. In a rage he turned away. One of his servants was a wise man and appealed to him to try this simple procedure—wash and be clean. He decided to swallow his pride and obey the prophet of God. When he dipped seven times in the Jordan he was cleansed, "*and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.*"

The lessons we learn from this Biblical account are several. First, we must go to the right source for help—the prophet and not the king. Second, one must then have faith enough to do what is required—not argue the point. Third, we must not challenge God's will at any point—we must yield. And fourth, we must obey God to obtain the desired end—salvation. Sin is worse than leprosy. Only the blood of Christ will take it away when we obey the gospel (**Rom. 1:16**).

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As long as Naaman fought the will of God, he remained a leper. What a lesson for those of us who live on this side of the cross. God requires the hearing of his word to gain faith (**Rom. 10:17**), confessing the deity of Christ (**Rom. 10:10**), repenting of sins (**Acts 2:38**), and being baptized for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38**). This is plain and simple. Many like Naaman are outraged at its simplicity and turn away, but they are still in their sins. Those who submit

and turn to God will go away with sins removed—saved.

Are you like Naaman? Many are. Why not be like the three thousand on Pentecost (**Acts 2**) or the Ethiopian eunuch (**Acts 8**)?

*"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). **

"SHOW ME YOUR FAITH..."

BY JONATHAN L. PERZ

In exposing the folly of the idea of faith without works, James writes, *"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works and I will show you my faith by my works"* (**James 2:17-18**). Could not the same challenge be directed toward many professing Christianity today?

Do our works match our professed faith in Christ Jesus?

In one sense perhaps we could argue that they do. You see, despite the inspired teachings of Jesus, many have chosen to go their own way and subscribe to man's doctrines instead of putting their faith in the word of God (**Rom. 10:17**). For instance, many who profess a faith in Christ Jesus ardently oppose the idea that baptism (immersion in water) is necessary for salvation. Jesus plainly said it is necessary (**Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20**). His apostles plainly practiced it as necessary (**Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21**, et al). So, those who do not believe that

baptism is necessary are showing their faith by their works. Their faith is clearly in something other than the teachings of Jesus Christ and His inspired apostles.

On the other hand, many who say they have faith and who have been baptized also demonstrate their faith by their works, or lack thereof. Paul instructed Titus that *"our people also learn to maintain good works"* (**Tit. 3:8, 14**). He also stated we should always abound in the work of the Lord (**1 Cor. 15:58**), works which we were created for (**Eph. 2:10**). This is an unfortunate testimony on the status of faith in our day.

So, not only has the faith of many been rendered vain by the false teaching of men, the faith of others has been rendered dead by the absence of works to demonstrate their faith.

Don't just talk about your faith! Show your faith! Prove that your faith is indeed in Him and not in men! *

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

Hear and Learn - **Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3**

Believe - **Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24**

Repent - **Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30**

Confess the Lord - **Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21**

Be Baptized - **Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27**

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - **Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17**

ABOUT THE HILLCREST CHURCH OF CHRIST

Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew

HOW TO CONTACT US

Telephone: (920)499-5677
E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com



OUR ADDRESS

1621 Hillcrest Drive
Green Bay, WI 54313

SCHEDULE OF ASSEMBLY

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com