

The BEACON



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In 1 Corinthians 15:58, Paul says, "be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not." God recognizes the temptation we have to get tired and let up in our fight for right. That is why so much of the bible is devoted to encouraging the righteous to keep fighting, no matter what the obstacles.

It is extremely hurtful when our own brethren turn on those who simply want to hold to the "old paths, wherein is the right way" (Jeremiah 6:16). However, it should not be surprising that the faithful are often in the minority. It has always been true. Remember the 12 spies that went into the land? How many came back with a positive report about taking the land? Only two! Remember the 10 lepers who were healed? How many came back to say thank you? Only one! How many listened to the preaching of Noah? Only his family! How many today see the dangers that are drifting into the thought processes of brethren? As the prophets of old, many preachers and elders today are ignored by an elitist attitude of arrogant brethren who refuse to see where they are heading.

I have recently read two items that are among many that are alarming to me. One is an advertisement from a "conservative church" which is promoting a "Veggie Tales" adventure in their Vacation "Bible" School.. The emphasis seems to be on "fun." Many brethren think "Veggie Tales" is a wonderful avenue for teaching the "bible" to children. The approach on the videos approaches blasphemy. Instead of teaching children about David and Goliath, the approach is to teach about "Dave and the 8 Foot Pickle." Let me ask; where is the dignity and respect for the Scripture in this type of teaching?

It is no wonder that many young people have little or no respect for the old, old story of Jesus! Are we to believe that the only way to reach our young people is to buy into these types of gimmicks? I deny that. Few parents and brethren know what their young people are capable of when it comes to Bible knowledge, simply because they have yet to be challenged. I have always been taught that children will produce what is expected of them! If we "dumb down" our bible teaching and change the Word, we will not have a generation that honors God, but one that mocks Him.

I wrote to the elders involved in this effort of "teaching" and have yet to receive a reply. Some brethren fail to sense any danger in these things and will likely continue on this course until they have departed the faith completely. On this journey to apostasy, they will continually justify themselves, no matter how conspicuous the danger. I well remember when the liberal brethren were having clowns and other sideshow events in their bible class programs years ago. Look how far out they are now! How soon some forget! Should our approach to things like this be silence? Should we fold and say nothing because no one will change? Absolutely not! We must remember what God said to Ezekiel in chapter 2:7- "and thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, for they are most rebellious."

The other item I read made reference to the Bible being written from a "flat-earth perspective." The article, by a supposed conservative preacher, tells us that for the ancient people of the Bible to understand what God was saying, God had to reveal it to them from the "false-science" perspective of the time. Who said so? Has this brother become privy to some new revelation from God? I believe all truth agrees with all other truth. Truth in biblical matters is consistent with scientific and geological TRUTHS (not speculations). This modernistic approach to understanding the bible will be ignored as "harmless" by many brethren. But if this brother or anyone else denies the virgin-birth, then the alarm will sound with many! Does it have to get so drastic for brethren to see the dangerous thinking in this brother's position? If part of the Bible is based on false premises, then how do we determine what constitutes truth? Again, I have written to this brother about similar teachings and still await a reply after almost a year.

Brethren, how did the Galatians leave the true gospel (Gal. 1:6)? Did it happen all at once? No, it was little by little. Just as a person gains weight a pound at a time, until one day he realizes he is grossly overweight and unhealthy, so it is with departure from truth. It is gradual, subtle and often undetected or ignored by even the most cautious. Brethren, we dare not grow weary in well-doing. It is time for all brethren to awake to the dangers. Do not wait for the enemy to knock on the gate before you sound the alarm. Soldiers of Christ must all stand as one armed for battle. (Eph 6:11-18). Don't quit stand firm! ---SWA---

ENTHUSIASM & ZEAL

In the Lord's church many have grown cold and complacent and have ceased to have the enthusiasm and zeal for the cause that is required and commanded by God. David, as a young man asked of Eliab, his older brother, "is there not a cause..." (1 Sam. 17:29). We have a cause that requires of all of us that we maintain consistent enthusiasm and zeal. All too many congregations have lost their will to reach the lost, to live godly and defend the cause fervently. How many brethren do you know who spend 1 hour a day trying to reach out to some lost soul? How many Christians call, write or visit with the weak, wayward or withdrawn from, in an effort to get them to repent and return to their first love? How many preachers actually go out in the community and make themselves known on sight? How many elders visit the members? How many members visit the sick and shut in? How often do you, as a Christian, pray to God fervently and engage in a detailed personal study of God's Word? How many come to Bible classes, having no idea of the subject? How many can recall in detail the lesson from one week ago? I am afraid that all too often, brethren, we are prone to grow complacent and apathetic to the serious task set before us by our Lord. We run hot or cold, but seldom find the necessary balance needed to sustain consistent, zealous service to God.

Often, in our efforts to not be "pentecostal" we have deadened our services into a mind-numbing performance for observation only. True spirit and Truth worship has escaped many brethren. Again the proper balance called for by God must be observed if we are to be pleasing to Him. How many song leaders actually think of the words of the songs they are leading? How many go over those words to see if they are scriptural? How many preachers have a plan of study for their lessons? How many are able to adapt their lessons to the audience, so they can preach to the need? How many preachers are more concerned with getting their "speech" delivered without a glitch in their audio or PowerPoint visual, than they are over the soundness and clarity of their message? How many times is the invitation flatly ignored, or given only minor attention? Do we really believe in the power of the Word (Rom. 1:16)? Are we preaching with expectations of the Word being applied?

Many brethren have lost their enthusiasm and zeal for service, due to a false sense of "faithfulness." Many falsely conclude that as long as they simply teach the old paths and reprove the false teachers, they have it made. While it is certainly essential that we do these things, it is equally essential that we do all of what God has told us to do. Remember the five churches of Asia who were in danger of having their candlestick removed. Most of them

stood against error, but they failed to stand for Truth in other areas. Laodicea was a wonderful church, if you asked them! But it was not their opinion that mattered, it was God's opinion of them that counted (Revelation 3).

We must all be careful that we do not ignore any of the counsel of God. It is right to stand opposed to error, and there needs to be more doing that, but we must not forget that the cause of Christ involves other things like, hospitality, love, gentleness, goodness, self-control, faithful attendance, fervent worship and an anxiousness to serve to the very best of our ability (Col. 3:23). We need to care for one another, all the time. We need to pray for one another, all the time. We need to serve one another not only when we are physically sick, but when we are spiritually sick. We must make every effort to watch for the souls of our brethren. We must also be careful not to destroy one another or the local work through our own lack of zeal and service. There is a cause! Let's zealously defend it in every aspect! ---SWA---



The Newton church of Christ
Meets at:
656 Saint James Church Road
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Sunday
Bible Study - 9:30 AM
Worship – 11:00 AM

Wednesday
Bible Study – 7:00 PM

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