

The Old Paths

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“Reversing God’s order”

Jarrold Jacobs

Have we ever noticed how diametrically opposed man’s will is to God’s? This becomes more apparent to me with the passing of time. When we observe men, it seems like many times we (knowingly or not) go out of our way to do the exact opposite of what God wants us to do! God has a divinely-prescribed order, but it has been reversed by men on many occasions!

For example: Man says that in order to have a satisfying and fulfilling life, one needs to “look out for number one.” In other words, make sure and satisfy all selfish desires in order to be happy. Yet, Christ said the two greatest commandments are, “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.... And ... thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*” (Matt. 22:37-39). The “*whole duty of man*” is to “*fear God and keep his commandments*” (Ecc. 12:13).

Man says we need to spend our lives trying to acquire a big bank account, and material goods. Christ said: “*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*” (Matt. 6:19-21). There are

many occasions when man has reversed God’s order. Let us consider the following examples.

Baptism’s Place In *noitavlaS*

While we recognize that the majority of people today say that baptism is not necessary to save men, the Bible says the opposite. Looking to Acts 22:16, we read where Ananias told Paul, “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” Denominational doctrine reverses God’s order! The denominations around us tell us to: “Call on the name of the Lord, and have your sins washed away, then be baptized, and arise and go on your way!” When it comes to baptism, will we respect God’s order, or will we reverse God’s order?

The *emoH*

It is apparent that man has been guilty of reversing God’s order when it comes to the home and family. For instance, God says that physical intimacy is reserved for marriage (Heb. 13:4); but man encourages such activity for those “in love,” and “emotionally ready” regardless of whether or not they are married. In fact, many are encouraged to “shack up” without being married in order to “try it out” and see if they could make it if they were married. As a result, the bond of marriage means little or nothing to man anymore. Children often come into this world before the parents are married. Yet, great emphasis is placed upon marriage, even in the beginning (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:4-6). Children are only legitimately brought into this world when a man and woman are married.

Sadly, in an effort to claim “equality,” society has reversed the roles of husbands and wives from God’s order. God’s order for the home and family is expressed in such passages as Ephesians 5:22-6:4 and Colossians 3:18-21. It would do us all good to read and re-read these passages. Marriage and the home are not products of “western” thought, or “Puritan” thinking, but have been in existence since the time of the first man and woman! Shame on us for trying to reverse God’s order.

Trusting In Man’s *toelletnl*

Too many are putting their trust in their worldly intellect rather than listening to God. The Bible declares that God made man (Gen. 1-2); yet there are people in society declaring that man made God! Furthermore, we find God’s word saying that, “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*” (Prov. 14:12, 16:25). Jeremiah said, “*O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*” (Jer. 10:23). Yet, we have a world of people declaring that they are wiser than God, and that someday man’s wisdom will prove that God doesn’t exist. Paul knew, “*the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men*” (I Cor. 1:25). God Himself said in the long ago, “*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts*” (Isa. 55:8-9). Who is ready to say he is smarter than God? Those who say such are reversing God’s order!

The Church’s *krow*

The world seems to think that the work of the church is to attempt to heal social ills. Some think the church’s

work is to solve political problems, or to provide unlimited benevolence for any indigent person.

God's order is just the opposite. The Bible tells us: "*For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*" (Rom. 14:17). The church is a spiritual body, the body of Christ (Col. 1:18, 24). She has a spiritual work (Eph. 4:12), and has a spiritual objective — pleasing God, not man! To please men means we're not God's servants (Gal. 1:10).

A local body of believers can work collectively in only three ways: Evangelism, Edification, and Benevolence toward needy saints (I Thess. 1:8; Eph. 4:12; I Tim. 5:16). For someone to say that the church can do more, or less, than what God has prescribed is to encourage sin and wrongdoing. We must not reverse God's order just because someone thinks one thing or another is a "good work!" Unless a thing is authorized of God, it is not a "good work" (II Tim. 3:16-17)!

Conclusion

God has spoken to us through His word (II Tim. 3:16-17). This word is a pattern or blueprint for our lives. Just as one who builds a house cannot start with the roof and build down; so also spiritually, we cannot reverse God's order and have any good come from it!

Look around at people and see if it is not true that with the passing of time, more and more are reversing God's order. Let us determine not to be like the rest of the world, but "*come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord*" (II Cor. 6:17). Let us leave God's word alone, knowing that blessings will come when we simply do what God says do without question or compromise, just as past heroes of the Bible did (I Pet. 4:11; Gen. 6:22; Ex. 7:6; Heb. 11; etc.).

"Jacob's Response To God's Word"

Jarrold Jacobs

Genesis 28:1-2 record Isaac sending Jacob to Padanaram to find a wife among his mother's people. After some traveling, Jacob spends the night in a certain place (v. 11). As he slept, he had a dream in which he saw, "*a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it*" (Gen. 28:12). In this dream, God blessed Jacob, promising him the same things He had promised Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 28:13-15).

Jacob then, "*Awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it*" (Gen. 28:16-18).

What application does this account have for us? First, notice that **Jacob awoke** (v. 16). He realized God was with him. Today, people need to awaken from their spiritual slumber that has them oblivious to the problems around them! (Like Jonah! - Jonah 1:5-6) Too many "religious" people are crying, "*Peace, peace; when*

there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14, 8:11), and lulling people into a spiritual slumber! It is high time that all understood that sin and error are not to be taken lightly. Let us hear the voice of God though His word, realize God is near, and wake up (Rom. 13:11-14)!

Jacob was afraid (v. 17). He had been in the presence of God Almighty! Let me suggest that it is high time that some people became afraid! Too many have an attitude of selfishness and pride, and say that they have no fear of anything. This is dangerous! God says that those who sin willfully in His sight, have nothing to look forward to except, "*a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*" Why? Because "*it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*" (Heb. 10:26-31)! Those that have refused God's word need to be afraid; for God's word will judge them one day (Jn. 12:48).

Finally, **Jacob arose** early and built an altar and consecrated it (v. 18). The pouring of oil to consecrate an altar was a true sacrifice to God on the part of Jacob. He offered this willingly, knowing Whom he was worshipping!

Similarly, when people hear God's word today (through the Bible), the honest hearts will have the same reaction. After awakening to the truth, and being afraid to stay in their sins, they will arise and do what God commands (Rom. 12:1-2). Friend, what will **YOU** do? (II Cor. 6:2)

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"**T**hus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Jer. 6:16)