

The Old Paths

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“Losing Our Focus”

Jarrold Jacobs

“Churches more driven by culture than directed by Scripture are leading precious souls to hell.” (Bobby Witherington, Truth Magazine, Vol. 43, p. 9, January 7, 1999)

The above quote by brother Witherington gets to the heart of the matter. When we see churches that are more concerned about their place in this world than in their standing with God, something is wrong! Unfortunately, there are untold numbers of people who are more willing to follow the world’s standard rather than God’s. When we see churches who wish to “appeal to the masses,” they have lost sight of what their focus ought to be! We see far too many “churches” (translation: social clubs) who are more interested in “numbers” than they are souls!

Don’t misunderstand, certainly each person has a soul, and they are important. However, there is a tendency among some to do “whatever it takes” in order to get people squeezed into a building! If this means that they make an appeal to the outer, rather than the inner man in order for them to be present, then so be it! This is wrong. When the apostles taught people, they continually pointed people to Christ. Wherever Paul went, this was true (I Cor. 2:5, 4:17). When the Colossian letter was written, Paul reminded those brethren of their goal, their focus in this life: “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right

hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col. 3:1-4).

The problem is that in an age of “political correctness” and in an age where the only intolerance tolerated is intolerance against God and Christians; some “churches” are falling into the snare of their culture. We see far too many brethren who would rather be politically correct than spiritually correct! There are some who cringe at the idea of a preacher preaching against denominationalism or worldliness. They are repulsed that one would dare speak as the Bible speaks and name those who are teaching falsehoods and the result of their false teaching (I Pet. 4:11; Eph. 5:11; II Tim. 2:16-18). As a result, you cannot tell these places apart from the denominations! Of course, we see far too many calling themselves Christians who are acting exactly like the world! How sad!

We understand that as long as people are in the world, the world will have an influence. But, the point of being in the Lord’s church is that we have been “called out” (ekklesia) of the world, and the Lord has put us into His church (Acts 2:47). Paul stated that God “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13). Seeing that this is true, true Christians will not act as the world acts, speak as the world

speaks, or think as the world thinks! God has called us to be a “peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit. 2:14; I Pet. 2:9). When people cannot see Christ living in us, we are showing that our culture has more of an influence on us than Christ does (Gal. 2:20).

Many great industries have fallen because they lost their focus. In like manner, when this church loses sight of the fact that we are in the soul-saving business, then we will fall into apostasy!

Let us not lose sight of the goal of Heaven, and let us not lose our focus as to what God intends for us to do. Let us be satisfied to be the Lord’s people in this community, and let us not be ashamed when we are called upon to “root out,” “to pull down,” “to destroy, and to throw down” the false doctrines and practices of men. Let us then be ready “to build, and to plant” when the ground is ready (Jer. 1:10). Those who are more concerned about “cultural” standards soon forget that preaching the Word requires reproving, rebuking and exhorting “with all longsuffering and doctrine” (II Tim. 4:2). May we never concern ourselves with man’s standards, but may we stand with Paul and say, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16).

Friend, have you lost your focus? I hope not. Let us “love one another with a pure heart fervently” (I Pet. 1:22). Let us show our love to Christ by being obedient to His will (Jn. 14:15; I Jn. 5:3). Let us, once we have followed His word, teach God’s word to others that they might know the truth and that their souls might be saved (Acts 1:1; II Tim. 2:2; I Tim. 4:16). Let us remember that the church is in the soul-saving business, and must not kneel to the whims of culture in a vain attempt at popularity.

“Traditional Differences Between Men And Women?”

David V Hurst, Somerset, KY

Just as God made male and female, it is certain that He intended them to be different. Recall that He first made Adam. Then, Adam had this problem (designed by God). Adam needed someone to “complement” him as a companion; to fill his needs. In brief, this is why God made a woman “different” than the man.

In Luke 2:52, we read that a person (as illustrated in Jesus) grows in “wisdom” (mentally), in spirit (favor with God), in personality (favor with man) and in body. Except for the spirit (1 Peter 3 teaches man and woman stand equal before God there), God made us very different (as males compared to females). There are mental, personality and body differences. It doesn't take long in life before we begin finding this out.

In studying the human body, we have been told that, physically, the immune system of a woman is stronger than a man's. However, in blood cells, a man has a million more red blood cells in every drop of his blood, which allows his body to work longer and harder, at the end of a day. He also has about 40% of his body weight in muscle (and there may be exceptions as myself, ha), while the woman's has only about 20%. We are told that a woman has a layer insulating her whole body. And ladies, get this, the man's skull is actually (speaking physically) thicker than hers. Did a wife ever suspect the man had

a “thicker head” than the woman,—hmm? There are more differences. And no doubt, there are many more differences that scientists have not yet found. Yes, we are different physically and in personality. These differences are quite apparent. For example, how many jokes have we heard concerning one sex not being able to understand the other?

What is the point? We live in a society that teaches “unisex” and other such nonsense. We have TV shows and other media that attempts to portray men and women as being the “same”; it is only society's cultural ignorance (they claim) that makes them different. Therefore, our society has attempted for many years to get people to give up traditional roles and to have women act like men (or vice versa). We must be alert to these trends that we may prepare the hearts of our young and avoid falling prey to these attitudes. We need to emphasize again (and strongly so) the Bible's teaching to our young and our brethren.

In considering whatever differences God made in us, God (and I say again, it is God who said it) knew to tell the man to look upon the woman as the “weaker vessel” and to treat her in that respect; that is, with protection and not with harshness. He is to give her honor. The days when a gentleman would open a door for a lady or give

up his seat that she might sit down was the result of godly attitudes between the sexes. We have lost much of that in our society today and the blame rests equally on fathers and mothers. Father's for expecting their wives to take upon the roles of the man and mother's for being discontent with their roles as women.

Further, God made no distinction between male and female as far as achieving Heaven is concerned; but as far as living on earth in human relationships, even within the church, there are distinctions in our roles. We must learn what they are. A parent, husband or even a friend who would desire happiness in their relationships would do well to consider these differences in their dealings with one another. There are so many areas that we might speak upon but let us conclude by exhorting all to fight to keep in mind the distinctions God built within us that we might live Christ-filled lives. If we are a man, be masculine, take our roles and act as we should within them. Never be lording or abusive. If we are a woman, be grateful that we are, be feminine and enjoy the role God has given us.

God's wisdom cannot be improved upon and by following his teachings, we will have happy marriages, homes and a strong society. Let your light shine (Matt. 5:16).

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