

The Old Paths

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“That Which Is Better”

Jarrod Jacobs

It is sad to see people who have become satisfied and comfortable with their life the way it is. Some have the attitude that if they reach a certain point equal to, or perhaps just above the “Jones’,” then they are happy. Unfortunately, there is an element in our society that presses for everyone to be the “same,” and cries “foul” if one seems to have a more enjoyable life than others.

The fact that one wishes to become a Christian shows that he wants to improve his life; for those who become Christians are to strive for that which is better. Here is one who wants to leave the “pig sty,” just like the Prodigal son did (Lk. 15:11-31). He no longer wants to live in sin. He wants to leave his relationship with sin and Satan (Eph. 2:12) and wants to enjoy a relationship with God (II Jn. 9). In order to do this, he must believe that Jesus is the Son of God (Jn. 8:24), repent of his sins (Lk. 13:3), confess his faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32), and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 22:16). All those who follow the Lord’s plan for salvation are saying that they are striving for that which is better. They know that following their wishes and thoughts will not get them to Heaven. They know that God is wiser, and wish to be in His presence for all eternity (Isa. 55:11; I Cor. 1:20-31; I Jn. 1:7).

Once one becomes a Christian, he is then free from his past sins (Rom. 6:17-18). Then, the true test begins! One who is a Christian recognizes that God’s word is the standard he follows, and not merely the consensus of the people (Jn. 12:48). He respects II Timothy 3:16-17 and knows that no act, word, or thought is a “good work” unless it is authorized by God in the Bible! He understands that His thoughts are important. His thinking must conform to the will of God, and he must think on things that are pure and upright, not on things that are debased and degrading (Rom. 12:2; Phil. 4:8). He sees that he is not to act like “everyone else.” In fact, most will wonder why he has changed so much (I Pet. 4:3-5). He recognizes that his speech must also be in line with the word of God (I Pet. 4:11). To talk as the world talks is unacceptable to a Christian, for he is striving for that which is better; a higher standard! Paul said: “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13-14). The word “press” means, “to pursue, ensue, follow, given to” (Strong’s). When Jesus talked of the two roads one may travel in this life, He said, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Lk. 13:24). To “strive” is to, “struggle, lit. (to compete for a

prize), fig. (to contend with an adversary), or gen. (to endeavor to accomplish something):--fight, labor fervently” (Strong’s). Christ was saying that this is what it takes in order to be on the strait and narrow road that leads to life (Matt. 7:13-14). We will not accidentally go to Heaven! It takes determination! It takes effort! It requires striving for that which is better!

Unfortunately, there is an element of lazy people who do not work toward this end. As a result, they are satisfied to stay in the “pig sty” long after the prodigal son has gone home to his father (Lk. 15:15-16)!

1) Some are satisfied to stay in the pig sty if it means they can have another drink! Alcohol so controls their lives that they would rather have it than the Lord. Remember, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Prov. 20:1).

2) Some are satisfied to stay in the pig sty if it means that they can be like the world. If they can dress like the world, talk, think, act, and die like the world, then they are pleased. John showed, “The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (I Jn. 2:17). Why would we wish to be like the world when we can strive for that which is higher, nobler, and better and be with God one day? This shows the pull that the world has that we must resist in order to be forgiven of sins, and in order to remain faithful to the Lord (Rev. 2:10)!

3) Some are satisfied to stay in the pig sty if it means that they can still

listen to their “favorite” teacher, regardless of whether or not he is teaching the truth of God’s word! “Just give me good ol’ brother so-and-so” is their cry, without any regard for whether or not this “brother” holds fast the pattern of sound words (II Tim. 1:13)!

4) Some are satisfied to stay in the pig sty if it means that they can have a “soothed conscience.” If a preacher preaches the truth (II Tim. 4:2), and does so as a “good minister” of the gospel (I Tim. 4:6), reminding people from whence they have fallen (II Pet. 1:12-15), then certain ones consider this man “offensive,” “rude,” “a meddler,” and someone for whom they have little or no respect! How sad, when this same one is respected and loved by the most high God, because he is doing what he is supposed to do!

5) Some are satisfied to stay in the pig sty if it means that they can wallow in their denominational dogma, their creedal crutches, or their pseudo-unity, in which they may “put aside” various differences for a time, but return to them when in the “safety” of their own meeting houses! The Bible says that true unity can be had, but it comes only when we lay down these man-made things, and unite under the blood-stained banner of the cross, to rely only and solely upon the book of God for our guidance (Col. 3:17). Yes, there can be unity, in fact, it is commanded (I Cor. 1:10). But, unity only comes when we agree to follow the right standard, and not follow what our parents did or did not do; what we like or do not like; nor what society approves, or does not approve!!

Conclusion

Yes, God calls those who are His children to a higher and nobler standard. He calls us to that which is better. Seeing that the New Testament is a “better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Heb. 8:6), doesn’t it make sense that His people would be called to a higher, better standard?

Don’t you want to be a part of the Lord’s family? If so, why not start today by becoming a Christian? Do not listen to what the denominational world says is necessary, but do as the Bible says! Why not live for God, doing His will, being “faithful unto death” that you might receive “a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10)? Do as Paul says and “be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58). Being a Christian is not for the lazy. It is not for the one satisfied to stay in the “pig sty”! Being a Christian is for one ready and willing to make the effort to live by a higher standard. It is for one who is willing to live by what God says, and not what the world says (I Pet. 4:11). It is for one who are spiritually minded, and not worldly minded (Rom. 8:6)!

What about you, dear friend? Where do you find yourself? Why not make your life right today!!

“What Is Your Attitude?”

Jarrood Jacobs

What is your attitude when it comes to sin? Is it something you consider funny? The Bible says, “fools mock at sin” (Prov. 14:9). Is sin something that you consider “no big deal,” or perhaps you think it is something serious, but not serious enough to change your life “right away”?

The Bible compares sin to a terrible wound (Isa. 1:2-6), a heavy burden (Ps. 38:4), a debt (Matt. 6:12-14), and a stain (Isa. 1:18-20; Jas. 1:27). Sin enslaves us (Jn. 8:34; Rom. 6:16), and it will cause us spiritual death (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 21:8). No one who dies in sin will see God.

Sins such as immodest dress, drinking alcohol (“socially” or otherwise), adultery/fornication, homosexuality, filthy language, and lusting toward others, are not jokes, or “minor” things. Your soul is at stake, friend.

Now, what is your attitude toward sin?

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