

The Old Paths

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“When The Invitation Is Offered...”

Jarrold Jacobs

“God has given you this opportunity to be saved from your sins. If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God (Jn. 8:24), will repent of your sins (Acts 17:30), will confess your faith in Jesus Christ (Matt. 10:32), and be baptized for the remission of sins, you can be saved (Mk. 16:16). God also calls those who have fallen away to come back by repenting of what they have done, confessing their sins, and praying God to forgive them (Acts 8:22; I Jn. 1:9). If you are subject to the Lord’s Invitation, come to the front and let us assist you as we stand and sing.”

These words are not always heard by folks during worship services. Many people are too busy shuffling papers, putting their things away, picking up toys, finishing their manicure, and a host of other things to listen to what is being said. Besides being rude to those who wish to hear what the preacher has to say, we show disrespect for God’s word when we hear the preacher conclude his lesson, and as the invitation is extended, decide it is time to “pack” and leave right then. What are some things we can do to show respect for God’s word while the invitation is being extended?

Listen Carefully.

It is important for us to listen carefully to the Word of God. Peter and the apostles stressed the

importance of listening when they beckoned the Jewish nation to “hear these words” concerning Jesus being the Son of God (Acts 2:22-36). If we are not listening, we may miss something that will be helpful in our spiritual growth. The invitation is not something that preachers say merely to “wind up” their sermon! These are serious, sober, and solemn words that are being used to urge one or more to come and make their life right with God. Even if we think these words are not applicable to us, let us listen carefully to what is said. We may be able to help someone come to Christ IF we know what to say (II Tim. 2:2)!

Think About The Sermon That Has Been Preached.

One thing that can be done while the preacher is making an appeal to those who have never obeyed God is to think about what has been said already. Something few people do is make applications of the lesson to themselves. Why not try that? Why not think about what the preacher has said, and see where the points could fit in your life (I Tim. 4:13, 15)? These moments of reflection can make a world of difference in your life (Ps. 1:1-2; II Cor. 13:5).

Decide To Be More Spiritually Minded In The Future.

Peter said, “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen” (II Pet. 3:18). In making

applications of the sermon, it is up to each and every one of us to decide that we are going to take what has been said and put it into practice! How sad it is to see people come to worship God week after week, year after year, and never grow at all! The problem is that they have not put into practice the things that they have learned. God not only expects us to listen to what has been said, but apply what has been said to our lives (Jas. 1:22-25). Please remember that the first thing the first century Christians did was “continue” in what they had learned after hearing the gospel in its purity and simplicity and obeying it (Acts 2:42).

Let us respect God’s word, and others’ right to listen to ALL of the sermon. Let us not waste that time. Let us listen intently, and leave the “clean up” until after the worship service!

“Happiness”

Aude McKee, Madison, TN

Occasionally we see a sign that reads: “Happiness is...” We are led to believe that happiness lies in doing all sorts of things -- even to drinking a certain kind of whiskey. Few, if any, who read this bulletin would think that happiness lies in that dissipation, but do we fear that we may be influenced by people in the world into believing that happiness comes from what we have and not from what we are. Two of the most miserable men who ever walked on this earth were Jesus and Paul -- if happiness lies in the possession of material things. Mary and Joseph were so poor they offered pigeons or turtledoves instead of a more costly sacrifice (Lk. 2:24),

and Jesus Himself at times had no place to lay His head (Matt. 8:20). An investigation of Paul's life, after he began preaching the gospel of Christ, will reveal a man whose life was almost completely void of all but the most basic things. May we hasten to add that we believe Jesus and Paul were two of the most happy men who ever walked on God's earth.

A long time ago, the Psalmist David wrote: "Blessed (happy) is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Ps. 1:1-3).

Can you go to bed at night with the knowledge that you have diligently investigated God's Word and have made a sincere effort to obey it? If so, you are a happy man! Can you wind up a day's affairs with the assurance that you have tried to treat every man as you would to be treated? If so, you are a happy man! Can you honestly say that whatever material things that you may have, they have simply been put in your trust for a while, and you have tried to use them for the glory of God and the good of your fellow man? If you can, you are a happy man!

Happiness is the result of what is on the inside of a fellow -- not what is on the outside. Happiness is a condition of mind and depends on spiritual possessions -- not material.

Strippers and Parents

Troy Nicholson, Henderson, TN

In case you missed the story in last Saturday's Tennesseean (5-28-05), a mother hired a stripper for her 16-year-old son's birthday party. She said there was nothing wrong with it, that a naked woman was nothing to get upset about. "I tried to do something special for my son. It didn't harm him." She went on to say, "We even had grandpa there," along with the boy's 14-year-old brother and other minors.

At first I was shocked when I read that a mother would do such a thing, but the more I thought about it the more I realized that she is not all that different from many other parents.

While most parents would never invite a stripper in person into their home, many of those same parents seem to think nothing of inviting strippers and other immoral people and activities into their homes via the television or video player. "A naked woman is nothing to get upset about" as long as she is on the screen. Try to put strippers in a building next door and the parents will fight against having them in town, but put a stripper in a movie and the parents will invite them into

their home. As far as God is concerned, they might as well invite a stripper in person into their home.

As the temperature increases, so does the number of people besides strippers at the clubs who begin to strip their clothes at the pool, beach, and other public places. Many of the same parents who would not let their children go see the club strippers do not hesitate to let their children go see the other strippers -- and even strip along with them.

The article said of the mother who invited the stripper that "once the dancer's 'bottoms' came off, she retreated into the next room." How often do parents retreat when they need to refuse? David said, "I will set no worthless thing before my eyes" (Ps. 101:3); and as the ones responsible for the upbringing of our children (Eph. 6:4), we as parents need to refuse worthless things before them. We must make sure they are not "conformed to this world, but...transformed by the renewing of (their) mind" (Rom. 12:2). We cannot lead them in this direction by inviting strippers into their lives.

(From: The Lakeview Lamp, June 5, 2005)

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