

The Old Paths

Volume 14, Issue 24

August 12, 2007

“Back To School!”

Jarrod Jacobs

Every year about this time, multitudes of children return to school to continue their education. After having the summer for vacation, it is time to again resume the studies. Returning to school can be a great time. For all those interested in obeying the will of God, let us be reminded about some facts when returning to school.

Remember To Pray

One song we sing asks the question, “Ere you left your room this morning, did you think to pray?” Prayer may be “outlawed” in our public school system, but no one can stop the individual Christian from praying to God anytime he wants! Therefore, remember to pray to God (I Thess. 5:17). Pray for strength when temptations come while at school. Pray for enemies we may face while at school (Matt. 5:44). Pray in gratitude to God for His wonderful world that we can study (I Thess. 5:18). Pray for others who you see are hurting in various ways. Parents, make sure and pray for your children daily while they are in school. Yes, pray and do not lose heart (Lk. 18:1)! *“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”* (Jas. 5:16), and there are many opportunities for prayer in school (Phil. 4:6; Eph. 5:20)!

Remember Your Creator

This is stated in Ecclesiastes

12:1. A great time to remember our Creator is while we are young. Remember your Creator while in school. There are many false doctrines perpetuated at school. For instance, the theory of evolution is taught as true in our schools (see: Gen. 1; Ps. 33:6-9; etc.). Many times in schools, our teenagers are taught “safe sex” rather than abstinence and waiting until marriage (see: Heb. 13:4; I Cor. 6:18; etc.). Now, we hear reports of schools teaching that homosexual activity ought to be considered “normal” (see: Rom. 1:26-27). Therefore, our young folks need to be grounded and founded in God’s word. They need to remember their Creator. Let us as parents make sure our young people know to Whom they belong (I Cor. 6:19-20)!

Remember Who You Are

Christ died so that men might be saved from sin (Matt. 20:28). When we accept the Lord’s plan for salvation, then we can be saved and wear the name of Christ (Mk. 16:16; Acts 11:26). Wearing Christ’s name means we now belong to Him. He is our master, and we serve Him (Rom. 6:16-18). Therefore, when our young folks return to school, may they remember just who they are. They are children of the King. Those who become Christians are now *“a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation...”* (I Pet. 2:9). Just think, this describes several of our own who are entering into the schools this year. Young people, remember who you are and have a great year!

Our Family’s Influence

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Very few will ever have in life what Solomon had as king of Israel. He was the wisest man, other than Jesus, to ever live — with more money and power than anyone since. He had so much wealth that even his army had shields of gold! (I Kgs. 10:16). When the queen of Sheba saw *“all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he built...the seating of his servants...there was no more spirit in her”* (vs. 4-5). There was nothing too difficult for him to explain nor was there a limit to his greatness and strength. He even excelled in his approach to worship and love for God (vs. 5, 12), who made Solomon’s success possible (v. 23, 24; 3:13; 4:29).

Despite his greatness with God, Solomon did not remain faithful to the Lord all the days of his life. *“For so it was, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David”* (I Kgs. 11:4).

Solomon, for most of his life, loved God with all of his heart. As he dedicated the temple to God, he *“arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying: ‘Blessed be the Lord...Let your heart therefore be loyal to the Lord our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day’”* (I Kgs. 8:54, 55, 61).

Solomon was very dedicated in his service to God, yet because of the influence of his ungodly wives he lost his sincerity. His heart had grown cold towards keeping God's word in its entirety, and he let the influences in his life convince him to see God's will differently. He did exactly what we as Christians are warned against today, *"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ"* (Col. 2:8).

It is possible to reach the point where we either quit serving God all together or are convinced to serve Him in ways contrary to His will. Good people can be mislead even in religion! (Rom. 16:18). Solomon was not the first to let his love for family convince him to depart from God's will, nor was he the last. Even today Christians are weakening their stand on marriage and divorce, denominationalism or other Bible doctrines simply because of the influence of their family. People who once understood the truth on these subjects, recognizing them to be God's will, are now compromising them for their children, mate and parents. It is not uncommon to hear of Christians leaving the Lord's church to become members of a denomination or to no longer see the need for baptism for salvation (Mk. 16:16), or to not divorce and remarry except for sexual immorality (Matt. 19:9), or to not use instrumental music in worship (Eph. 5:19). The Lord's church becomes nothing more than anyone who professes a faith in Jesus as Lord, instead of a blood-bought institution of believers who keep His will (Acts 20:28; 19:1-5; Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:1-6; Matt. 7:21, 22).

Anyone can call Jesus Lord, even demons, *"But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?"* (Jas. 2:19, 20). Those who try to serve God apart from His will have neither the faith nor the love for God to be saved. Abraham did not let anything, not even his love for his son, keep him from remaining to God's will (vs. 21-24), so how can we claim to have a faith as strong as his when we compromise the laws of Christianity to please our family? What is faith and love?

There are invaluable lessons we should learn from Solomon's sin:

(1) Marry godly people — more often than not, Christians who marry non-Christians (in the New Testament sense) are more likely to depart from God. *"Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things?"* (Neh. 13:26).

(2) Love God first — Jesus said He did not come to bring peace, but a sword, especially in our relationship with our family (Matt. 10:34-39). If our family refuses to keep God's will, our only option is to love God more — even if this divides our family! Some of us may even have to no longer keep company with family who are erring Christians, but such is needed in bringing that person to repentance (II Thess. 3:14) and in remaining loyal to God (II Cor. 2:9). Life is a test of our love and

faith in God — not a place of eternal bliss with family. And if God so loved the world that He gave His only Son for us, how can we give any less and still say we love Him with all of our heart? Furthermore, how will our family ever see the need to obey God if we compromise His word with them? What does God think of those who are ashamed of His word? (Mk. 8:38; Rev. 21:8). What does He want us to do when others reject us for truth's sake (I Pet. 4:16)?

Friends, let us learn from Solomon. Even the most sincere of God's people can be lead astray by the influence of family and friends.

"Could It Be ..."

Selected

- that people reject the Bible—not because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them?
- that some brethren do not attend various worship periods and Bible study classes because Christ is not really their "first love"?
- that Satan has lulled us into thinking that we are really standing, when indeed, we are ready to fall?
- we utterly abhor the violence going on in the world, yet do not think twice about what our families entertain themselves with on television and at the movies?
- that some brethren honestly see no connection between commitment, attendance, and involvement?

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www.southside-churchofchrist.com



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"Thus 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)