

Pitfalls

A pitfall is a concealed trap, a danger not easily recognized, a snare. All who travel the road of life need to be on guard.

Strong Drink is a Pitfall

Many do not realize how addictive alcoholic drinks can be. The Bible warns, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (**Prov. 20:1**). One can fall into the trap of addiction before he is aware that he has been snared.

Dancing is a Pitfall

Couples holding each other in close embrace are strongly tempted to go further. Lust entices. "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin" (**James 1:14, 15**). Fleshly lusts should be avoided because they "war against the soul" (**1 Pet. 2:11**).

by Irvin Himmel

Evil Companionship is a Pitfall

Many are led into wickedness by ungodly companions. "Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habit" (**1 Cor. 15:33, NNV**). Young people are especially vulnerable to this trap. One should choose his close companions carefully and wisely.

Fault Finding is a Pitfall

Some seldom acknowledge anything good in others. They harp on what is wrong with their neighbors, acquaintances, relatives, and brethren in the Lord. They remind one of the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees.

To avoid pitfalls we must be alert. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise" (**Eph. 5:15**). The devil lays snares and attempts to hide them. We need to be sober and maintain vigilance.



Classes This Week

Sunday 5:15 Kids Class in the Auditorium	Tuesday 8:00 PM Truth Seekers in room 2310 of the student center
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Lisa Carter (Luke's mother)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Nell Holcomb (Ben's grandmother, Joannetta's aunt)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Ruth Addison (mom of April and Julie)
Madeline Morton (Greg Lanier's g'daughter)	Alexander Locke (Jeremiah's cousin's son)	Betty Bradford	Jay Jennings (Brooke Perkins' dad)
Jean Buchanan (Abbie Harrison's grandmother)	Tina Atnip (Orie's cousin)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Arabelle Rich (Joannetta's aunt)	Sasha Rozier (Makenzie Reynolds' cousin)	Charles Hunt, chuck Hunt's dad
Gay Ulrich (Emma's mom)	Charles Cecil (Orie's g'dad)	Taina Acuff (Anna's aunt)	John Duke (Jared Johnson's cousin)

April Birthdays

- 1-Rachel Hobgood
- 2-Caroline Scott
- 3-Cameron Abernathy
- 4-Julie Henriquez
- 5-Tate Pender
- 5-Oseas Chavez
- 8-Laura Humphrey
- 8-Hannah Morris
- 8-Hayley Wright
- 9-Brooke Perkins
- 12-Becky Daniels
- 12-Austin Adams
- 14-Jesse Roberts
- 14-Anna Price
- 16-Carla Luther
- 16-Carson Fowler
- 17-Cal Sandlin
- 18-Spencer Sullivan
- 18-Taylor Godwin
- 18-Joel Black
- 20-April Jerkins
- 20-RJ Martin
- 22-Paul Grubbs
- 23-Anna Miller
- 23-Catherine Butler
- 24-Bob Simpson
- 25-Elijah Jackson
- 28-Johnathan Hand
- 29-Ariah Strickland

News and Notes

- ☒ - Chuck Hunt's mother, Jane, was able to go home and is improving.
- ☒ - We rejoice in the baptism of baptism of Steven Darby, Sarah's brother!
- ☒ - After suffering a heart attack, Jimmy Owen had successful heart procedures this week and has returned home.
- ☒ - We rejoice in the marriage of Orie and Carmen Cecil!
- ☒ - We encourage our members to always be looking out for visitors and reach out to them.
- ☒ - Please pray for our expectant mothers: Paula Davis, Xiang Li Brooke Perkins and Ingrid Chavez.
- ☒ - Please continue to pray for Gustavo as we are seeking to have approval of a work visa so he can continue to preach here!
- ☒ - Toni Herd is scheduled to have brain surgery this Wednesday in Birmingham.

The Auburn Beacon



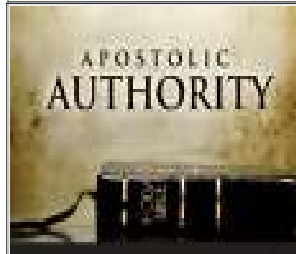
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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Majoring and Minorng

By Connie W. Adams



Thoughts to Ponder

Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. (**Philippians 3:17**)

More and more we are hearing that "we need to major in the gospels and minor in the epistles." What is that all about? What it is about is the so-called "new hermeneutic." It places greater importance on what Jesus said and did than on what the apostles said and did. It is a part of the scheme to rid ourselves of the restraining influences of finding a direct statement, approved apostolic example or necessary inference to authorize our teaching and practice.

We have some among us who are terrorized by the ghost of tradition. Never mind that traditions are sometimes approved and other times condemned. Paul wrote, "Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern" (**Phil. 3:17**). He also said, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle" (**2 Thess. 2:15**). The church at Thessalonica was charged to "withdraw from every brother who walks

The biblical doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is a comforting concept. Those who would rob us of this hope are not friends of the cause of Christ.

disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us" (**2 Thess. 3:6**). So, all traditions are not to be rejected.

The Source of Apostolic Teaching

Those who worry about putting too much emphasis on the epistles need to be reminded of the source of the message in the epistles. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth, bringing to their remembrance what Jesus had taught them, and revealing to them truth which Jesus had not expressed while with them in person. Read **John 16:7-**

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
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14. Paul said, "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches" and then added, "But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:13,16). "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37).

Now, if the apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit, had the mind of Christ, and what they wrote were the words of Christ, how say some among us that we need to minor in the epistles?

New Testament congregations which received and obeyed apostolic instruction in the epistles were following the will of Christ. That is why Jude wrote, "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 17). Those words were a pattern to shape our thinking and practice.

A "Better" Way?

Some of those who are weary of precept, approved apostolic example and necessary inference, tell us that this is not all bad but they have found a "better way," that in addition to these means of establishing divine authority, we may add the three "P's", principle, purpose and perception. Older brethren will recall the time when E.R. Harper was trying to find divine authority for the Herald of Truth sponsoring church arrangement and came up with "principle eternal." He had no precept, no approved apostolic example and no necessary inference from the word of God, so he found it in "principle eternal." But how do we know what principle to follow except in terms of what the word of God actually says? How do we know what purpose is to be served apart from divine instruction? How do we know what perception or per-

spective was present except from what is said in the text?

It is being argued that the only pattern for us is what we think Jesus would do. That is a subjective approach to religion. We "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). Faith rests upon solid evidence, not subjective feelings and perceptions. The truth of the matter is that Jesus taught by the use of commands and precepts. What do you make of the Great Commission if that is not so? He "left us an example that we should follow in his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). He also drew necessary conclusions (Matt. 22:23-33) or left it so that his hearers would do so.

There seems to be a terrible dread among some (especially some younger men) that they will do something which brethren have done before and therefore will fall into some theological rut from which they will not be able to extricate themselves. So they tinker with the order of the worship until it borders on disorder. They fear that worship will not be exciting enough. But exciting to whom? To us, or to our God? They must deliver us from boredom. But who is bored? Are we bored, or is God? Certainly worship ought to be offered from the whole heart. We ought not to go through empty rituals. But God has ordained certain acts of worship and who am I to say that he is bored when his children perform these acts in harmony with what God himself instructed us to do?

These are dangerous times. The only safe guide to see us through these times is the inerrant, eternal word of God. It is a perfect guide. Our eternal destiny is too important to entrust to the shifting sands of human opinion and subjective religion. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psa. 11:3) Let's hear what Jesus said in the gospels but let's not minimize what he said in the epistles through Holy Spirit-guided apostles. That is also a part of the word that will judge us in the last day (Jn. 12:48-49).

Guardian of Truth - October 7, 1993



A close look at Matthew 18:15-17

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' "And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17 NKJV)

This passage is second only to Matthew 7:1 ("Judge not") in popularity among the replies given by those who have been called out for their sins and their sympathizers. It is especially invoked when one publicly sins in word or deed and is immediately or shortly publicly rebuked for his transgression. The one rebuked and his sympathizers often throw this passage back at the one doing the public rebuking. "You are also guilty because you did not first come to me, or go to him privately, like the Bible says."

These verses are not the pattern for dealing with sin publicly committed. It is the pattern for dealing with private sin known only to the offender and offended. It has two objectives: to gain a brother and to keep private sins as private as possible. Notice the progression from being known by two individuals (the offender and the offended alone). If it is resolved at this level it need not be known by anyone else. If not resolved by the two alone, then it is made known to two or three more called upon to help resolve it. If this fails,

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then it is made public by telling it to the church. Then if the church cannot persuade the offender to correct it, then he is to be treated as a "heathen and tax collector" (the same as withdrawing and having no company with as in 2 Thess. 3). In this scenario, the sin began privately between only two people and then progresses to public knowledge only if private efforts to gain the offender's repentance is not accomplished.

Insisting on invoking this pattern to be applied to sin already public knowledge reduces the first two steps to mere formalities to say nothing of being unnecessary. When sin is publically committed it is already past the first two steps of our text. It is being publicly made known as it is being committed. It is known by the church.

Just one other observation about this passage. There is an idea that renders this passage totally unnecessary. If the offending party in a sin is to be unconditionally granted forgiveness by the offended party even before he repents then it makes this whole instruction unnecessary. If this be the case, then the instruction of these verses could be greatly reduced. It would read, "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and put your arm around him and tell him that you love him and FORGIVE him." Then one could go on his way feeling great that he has a forgiving spirit – while leaving the offender still guilty of his fault.

