

Questions to Ask When We Complain

When we complain about others, perhaps we should ask ourselves if we are projecting a bit. That is, are we guilty of the attitudes and errors we accuse others of having? I have often wondered about the older brother in the parable of the prodigal. With all that he accused his brother of, then claiming he had never neglected his father's commands, makes me wonder if such a spirit protests too much and reveals a hypocritical guilt. At the least he showed an attitude of entitlement and lack of mercy. But then that was Jesus' point. If we accuse others of being cold and unfeeling, is it possible that has been our problem? If we accuse others of being hypocritical, pharisaical, and legalistic, has that been our error?

by Doy Moyer

If we complain that other Christians are unspiritual or lack zeal, have we been that way?

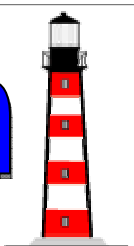
If we charge others with arrogance because they disagree with us, are we being arrogant?

Do we condemn in others what we applaud in ourselves or our associates?

I'm not saying it must be this way, but it is important that we check ourselves lest we find ourselves in this passage: "Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things" (Rom 2:1).

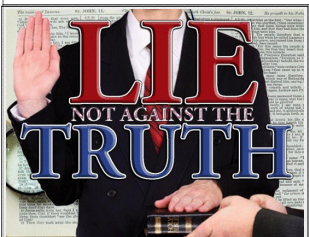


<p>Graduates Cameron Abernathy Alaina Barham Michael Bassie Taylor Bethea Morgan Cavender Jordan Corneil Haley Gay Sara Lail Hayden Phillips Ty Randolph Julian Reid Rachel Tolliver</p>			
<p>News and Notes</p> <p>☒ - Shawn Lauderdale is out of ICU in the hospital in TX and improving. ☒ - Peggy Bowers, aunt of Yvette Rouse and Tammy Tolliver, died yesterday in KY after suffering a stroke. ☒ - Abbie Harrison continues to make progress with her rehab and hopes to return to Auburn soon. ☒ - Debbi Coleman's mom, Ann Mitchell, had successful surgery this week! ☒ - Please pray for our expectant mothers: Paula Davis and Xiang Li. ☒ - We are saddened that Jeremiah Johnson's cousin's son, Alexander Locke, passed away on Tuesday. ☒ - Shawn Lauderdale continues to make progress in rehab in TX. ☒ - Gospel Meeting at the County Line church of Christ in Deatsville, AL Sun-Fri, July 30-Aug 4. Jeremy Paschall preaching. ☒ - Jon Coleman's dad, Brub Coleman, obeyed the gospel! ☒ - We welcome new members Joel and Chandler Sullivan and daughter, Emersyn!</p>			
<p>July Birthdays</p> <p>1-Collins Hanners 2-Josh Gooch 8-David DeFoor 8-Angela Fernandez 11-Chase Winslett 11-Madi White 11-Clay Morris 14-Laurel Jerkins 14-Megan Hester 15-Bradley Seymore 16-Katie Martin 17-Whitney Sutton 19-Jay Borden 21-Tori Luther 22-Kate Fortenberry 24-Haley Gay 24-Carla Zacarias 25-Betty Bradford 25-Yvette Rouse 26-Brandon Hester 27-Tiffany Green 29-Hayden Phillips</p>			
<p>Lisa Carter (Luke's mother)</p>	<p>Jesse Godwin (Troy's father)</p>	<p>Nell Holcomb (Ben's grandmother, Joannetta's aunt)</p>	<p>Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)</p>
<p>Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)</p>	<p>Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)</p>	<p>David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)</p>	<p>Ruth Addison (gmom of April and Julie)</p>
<p>Madeline Morton (Greg Lanier's g'daughter)</p>	<p>Anna Price</p>	<p>Betty Bradford</p>	<p>Reba Patterson (Heath Fowler's mom)</p>
<p>Jean Buchanan (Abbie Harrison's grandmother)</p>	<p>Tina Atnip (Orie's cousin)</p>	<p>Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)</p>	<p>William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)</p>
<p>Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)</p>	<p>Arabelle Rich (Joannetta's aunt)</p>	<p>Jane Hunt (Chuck's mother)</p>	<p>Charles Hunt, (Chuck Hunt's dad)</p>
<p>Gay Ulrich (Emma's mom)</p>	<p>Toni Herd</p>	<p>Taina Acuff (Anna's aunt)</p>	<p>John Duke (Jared Johnson's cousin)</p>



A People of Principle

By Tim Nichols



Thoughts to Ponder
 Buy the truth, and do not sell it, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding. (Proverbs 23:23)

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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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Larry Rouse
 Evangelist and Editor

Christians, above all others, are to be a people governed by principles. The world may not yield to an obvious code of conduct, but God's children recognize that the distinct teachings of God's Word give us higher and better rules than our own to guide us through life. Just as Luke wrote of "those things which are most surely believed among us" (Luke 1:1), we can speak of our common commitment to settled principles that have been revealed from Heaven. Those precepts are the standards held high by the pillar and ground of the Truth (1 Tim. 3:15). They are honorable, virtuous, and noble (Phi. 4:8-9). Only to the degree that our scruples are shaped by untainted Truth can we live uprightly. Divine precepts are to be kept diligently (Psa. 119:4). We are to long for, love, and meditate upon them (vv. 15, 40, 159). We can understand them and talk of them (v. 27). They give us comfort and hope when men hold us in derision (vv. 49-56). Divine principles come as a package (Psa.119:128, 168).We either trust God and obey Him concerning all of our ways, or we do not trust Him at all. He Who inspired the living, powerful Scriptures that are able to discern the thoughts and intents of our hearts knows everything about us and everything about every situation that we will encounter (Heb. 4:12-13). Divine principles are the hand of God helping us (Psa. 119:173). They re-

quire us to acknowledge our own lack of personal wisdom and our need to rely upon Him. Those who count themselves wise enough to value their own wisdom above God's slaps His hand away. Principles connect with one another (Isa. 28:10-13) and builds upon another and enlarges it. Some make perfect sense only when understood in light of some others. All are consistent with all others. True precepts from the mind of God never contradict each other. When human principles enter the stream they corrupt it. Sometimes men become guilty of attempting to teach others of their duty toward God by using mere human principles. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men (Isa. 29:13). This practice seems to especially prevail when difficult matters arise and consequential choices must be made concerning people. Even well respected and well-meaning brethren have been known to invent principles with which they attempt to control others under special circumstances. These often contradict and nullify principles God gave for our guidance. For example, God teaches us to meekly seek to restore those overtaken in a fault (Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:25) and shows us that doing so has the effect of saving

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a soul from death (**Jam. 5:19-20; Jude 23**). We are to mark those who "cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine... and avoid them" (**Rom. 16:17**). God's principle is that we must have no company with brethren who will not obey God, but to admonish them as brethren rather than as enemies (**1 Cor. 5:9-11; 2 The. 3:6, 14-15**). We are not to bid God speed to those who will not respond to such admonitions (**2 John 9-11; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim 3:5; Tit. 3:10**).

God provides a very detailed prescription for applying this principle to personal offenses (**Mat. 18:15-17**). These precepts are not difficult to understand or to apply until precepts of men interfere. Perhaps because these principles require action with reference to people we know and love and those who are unpleasant and bothersome men find it easy to develop their own principles that modify those of God. Even otherwise sound brethren can be guilty of this practice as are those who are apparently going out from among us. Since these Divine principles touch upon so many matters that affect the kingdom from fellowship with denominations to our personal duty to assist some specific brother to go to Heaven - it is worth our time to notice some of those human principles that would abrogate Divine ones.

"We Can Never Be Sure of the Facts"

This agnostic human precept flies in the face of **Matthew 18:15-17** and ignores the force that God tells us to give to credible testimony (**Num. 35:30; Deu. 17:6; 19:15; John 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28-29**). On the face of it, whenever God teaches us that we are to do certain things under certain conditions, then those conditions can be known to exist at least some of the time.

"The Truth Is Always Midway Between the Extremes"

This is not merely a harmless, human, unbiblical observation. It has grievous consequences when applied. It judges all testimony to be unworthy of belief. If we applied it consistently, we would have to find the midpoint between the testimony of Diotrephes and that of John (**3 John 9**) and between every other set of extremes between the Bible and the world. The Truth often has an extreme contrasting lie. Our duty is either to find the Truth or to recognize that we have not found it.

"It is Wrong To Deal With Personal Attacks; We Can Only Challenge the Doctrinal Sins of Others"

We are not able to find such precepts in the Divine principles. These human precepts would condemn Paul for dealing with the Corinthian brother who had

his father's wife and John for responding to the personal attacks of Diotrephes. In our day these principles would provide safe haven for every slanderer and fornicator, whether in pulpit or pew.

Divine Principles do not yield. Unqualified Divine principles apply to all persons at all times and in all circumstances. Their nature is such that we cannot use them today for one purpose and then discard them tomorrow for different purposes. We cannot apply them to foes and then ignore them when friends are involved. They guard us from being partial in our judgment (**1 Tim. 5:21**). While they sometimes force us to act when we would much rather remain still, they also restrain us when we might otherwise act rashly.

Divine principles unite. When we keep them pure, they bring us together. When we contaminate them they divide: "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" (**Psa. 119:63**).

Divine principles liberate. They free us from the obligation to act when many around us apply pressure to do so. "And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed" (**Psa. 119:45-46; see also vv. 69, 78, 87, 94, 110, 134**). They free us from the responsibility of deciding what ought to be done or said (**1 Cor. 4:1-4**).

Principles impose obligations. Principles become premises, premises lead to conclusions, and conclusions have consequences. We bind ourselves with a duty to act in ways that agree with our principles once we have expressed what they are (**Rom. 2:1, 3**). The man who asserts that "the truth regarding another's conduct cannot be known," for example, must remain passive and silent at all times. Otherwise he is clearly out of duty, and his own conscience should testify to his hypocrisy if he speaks even once concerning another's conduct. No rebuke or kindly admonition should be needed to show it to him. He will be judged by even the arbitrary principles that he seeks to bind upon others (**Mat. 7:1-5**). We must take care not to adopt unbiblical principles as standards of judgment for others.

May we rather fill our hearts and mouths with Divine principles and apply the winnowing fork to those that are human.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power (**Col. 2:6-10**).



The Pattern for Personal Apostasy

By Dee Bowman

It seems to me that even evil follows a predictable pattern. I have seen one or two persons, on rare occasions, suddenly and unexpectedly bolt from the faith and forsake God— seemingly all in one motion. However, this has certainly been the exception and not the rule. Most people who leave the faith do so gradually. And when they do, they follow what almost appears to be an assigned course prescribed for the purpose of absenting oneself from the faith and separating oneself from a divine connection with God.

One who falls away from Christ usually begins by neglecting his private worship. For instance, he will go for long periods without giving any time to meditation about God. Even when he is not under the duress of existing circumstances, he rarely ever contemplates anything about his personal relationship with God. He, because of this same type of neglect, stops praying and giving thanks to God for his goods, health, or others of his blessings. He feels smugly secure in his own egotistical pride and begins to reason that humility is a weakness, tears are for "softies," and that things like moral courage, sacrifice, and virtue, are not worthy of his time or attention. In short, the time he once gave to personal devotion to glorify God is now totally wasted in efforts to satisfy himself.

One who becomes disinterested in spiritual service will soon begin to show a lack of interest in the public worship services. No one can, for any length of time, "fake" interest in a cause. His lack of attention will soon expose his true feelings. So it is with one who leaves his first love. He starts the process by no longer listening attentively to the songs, the sermons, the prayers. His mind is no longer "tuned in" to those things which should occupy his attention, and even though it may outwardly appear to be otherwise, he really is doing no more than occupying a pew.

At about that time the excuses begin to pour out with the rapidity of white water rapids. The number of "reasons" for his lack of participation are so emphatic that it becomes obvious that too much emphasis becomes no emphasis at all.

The next thing you will notice about our wandering brother is that he will become sporadic in his attendance, particularly on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights. Then it won't be long before he ceases to avail himself of the opportunities at all. He makes for himself excuses that are logical only to him and make no sense at all to those who are anxious about his seeming lack of interest in the work of the church where he is supposedly a member.

Then when someone confronts him about his obvious lack of concern, he is immediately insulted and becomes indignant. He just can't imagine anyone thinking he is not as faithful as he should be. Why, the very idea! At about that time the excuses begin to pour out with the rapidity of white water rapids. The number of "reasons" for his lack of participation are so emphatic that it becomes obvious that too much emphasis becomes no emphasis at all. It's now apparent—if only to him—that someone is "out to get him," that he is "just as good as so-and-so," and that if he told all he knows about the other members there would be a moral explosion of major proportions.

Finally, he quits. He now has what he has sought for some time—a reason to leave. And, mind you, that "reason" has nothing whatever to do with him, nor is he leaving because of his own neglect, indifference, or lethargy. You see, he was driven away. The blame belongs on the church. They never wanted him there in the first place. How sad! How very sad!

The devil is subtle, cunning, crafty. He doesn't often invite people into the slime pits of sin; rather, he induces them a bit at a time. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (**Hebrews 2:1**).

