

EXCUSED FROM EVANGELISM?

I am surprised at times when brethren who sincerely want to follow the Word of God will abuse contexts when something is not going to conform to their pre-conceived ideas. Many examples of this can be found, but only a couple will be shown to best illustrate the problem.

How many times have we heard brethren say, "The Bible does not say anything against beer or cigarettes"? Or, how about our teens who challenge us with, "Well, can you show me where the Bible says dancing is wrong?" This kind of thinking and reasoning (?) was prevalent over 100 years ago when the Lord's body was ripped apart with the "wedge" of instrumental music being hammered into place by some of our brethren. For more than a century this division has plagued our members, and the chasm exists now to the point that where the difference was *once* perhaps "just the instrument" (although the difference that caused the introduction of the instrument was actually a disrespect for the authority of God's Word), the differences *now* are too numerous to list just here, and those within the so-called "Christian Church" denomination are not even Christians.

It is all so senseless, so wasteful and so foolish to allow our own will to be placed before that of the Lord, and before the authority of His Word. As was asked of the prophet, so I have been asked at times, "Is there a word from the Lord?" (Jeremiah 37:17). It is sad to recognize as did Jeremiah that the question was not asked from a desire to know God's will, but more as a challenge to "prove me wrong on this one." As Jeremiah answered, so do I: "Yes, there is a word from the Lord and some are not going

to like to hear it!" There are answers and the Lord **has** spoken, but more often than not, those who have asked will not change because it will interfere with their own desires!

This present article is not written to address false worship practices, but rather another false idea concerning personal evangelism. Plainly put, far too many members of the Lord's church have been led to believe, or have convinced themselves that they are excused from evangelism based upon some notion that such work is a "talent" that God has given to some and not others. From where did this silly idea come? Probably from a faulty interpretation of 1 Corinthians chapter 12. It is alleged that since Paul was speaking of different parts of the body, and that each part had a different function, then surely not all of the members are required to do "personal work." The most obvious fault in this "reasoning" is that Paul is not addressing evangelism, but rather spiritual, charismatic, miraculous gifts--direct manifestations of the Holy Spirit upon those believers. Friends, such occurrences do not take place today, and thus, such instructions are not applicable today. This is not to say that some principles are not valuable from that chapter. Just a few of these are: 1)the brethren ought to not feel they can function alone; 2)no member may feel superior to any other; 3)each Christian should do his/her part in building the body up in love and unity (see Ephesians 4). But we cannot use this chapter to try to formulate an excuse from trying to reach the lost individually.

The Bible makes clear that evangelism or personal work is not a talent, but a duty for each Christian. Though it is true that some may be more "talented" in this work, it is

due largely to the fact that they have seen their duty before God and thus have applied themselves and have gained much experience. This does not excuse the Christian who will not develop the ability necessary to fulfill the Lord's command to seek and save the lost. We can all begin by simply inviting others to come and hear the Gospel preached, either weekly or during our special occasions when we have organized a Gospel meeting. Be like Andrew, as recorded in John 1:40-42, "One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter)." Brethren, it is time to stop hiding behind some comfortable position (actually a false doctrine) and get busy for our Master in bringing others to Him! Consider this account:

In II Kings 7, the Bible tells us about four lepers who found themselves in Samaria in the midst of an awful famine. Samaria had been besieged by the Syrians, and the people were destitute...even to the point of women eating their own children. These four lepers reasoned among themselves and concluded this way: "If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die" (verse 4).

So, they went to give themselves over to their enemies. What did they find? An empty camp: God had frightened them away the previous night with the sound of horses and chariots. The lepers found all the food they could eat, plenty of clothes and silver and gold and they began hoarding it. But suddenly, it came to them that they were being selfish. They said, "Then they said one to another, We do not well; this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, punishment will overtake us; now therefore come, let us go and tell the king's household" (verse 9).

Brethren, we have found something far better than silver, gold, food, and clothing...we have been made partakers of the Gospel. Truly we too live in a day of good tidings. Let us go and tell others lest the King Eternal become angry and punishment overtake us when He comes! "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6.2).

RAGER ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST

5775 Rager Rd, Canal Winchester, Ohio 43110
Phone: 614-830-0110
Website: www.ragerroad.org



SCHEDULE OF SERVICES:

SUNDAY MORNING	BIBLE STUDY	9:30 A.M.
	WORSHIP	10:30 A.M.
SUNDAY EVENING	WORSHIP	6:00 P.M.
WEDNESDAY	BIBLE STUDY	7:30 P.M.
Preachers:	Robin W. Haley	614-751-1082
	James Grayson	614-409-094

March 1, 2009

Weekly Budget: \$1360.00

Weekly Item Needed: HAND SOAP- IN SQUIRT BOTTLES

Wednesday's Wisdom:

"Persevere...The crown of life is waiting!" James Grayson

Prayers for: Steve Anticoli's sister, Gloria, who had a stroke; **Hubert Wiley's** sister, Sheila, who is diagnosed with liver cancer; brother **Lloyd** and his battle with cancer; **Grell & Suzie's** mom who had surgery due to her diabetic condition; **Lauren Bell** who has or did have "walking pneumonia"; sister **Dana Turpin** who has had her heart pace-maker "tuned up" for her needs; **Cheryl's** sister-in-law, Lora, who will be facing cancer surgery in March.

Bridal shower information for sister **Whitney** is on the bulletin board.