

## *Changing the Purpose, Changes Everything (2)*

David Halbrook

Last week, we learned that God examines us inside and out. He expects us to do *what* He teaches for the purpose He teaches. Anything less is a failure to do His will (Mt. 7:21).

In Acts 19, Paul met some men who had been baptized, but after talking to Paul they were baptized again. Why be baptized again? Aren't all baptisms alike? No. There were differences between the purpose of John's and Jesus' baptism. No doubt, Paul taught them that baptism must be by faith in the working of God, to add us to Christ, and thus His Church, through His death/blood (Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:3). As Peter said, *in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins* (Acts 2:38).

This is what we teach, not because of any man-made movement but because we believe, like Paul, that baptism and its purpose is from Jesus. Who in the Bible was baptized *after* being saved? Which apostle called baptism "an outward sign of an inward grace" already given or claimed it was for inherited sin? These are the baptisms of Protestant and Catholic, not of Jesus' Church. Does it matter why you are baptized? Changing the purpose, changes everything.

Editor's Note: This week's article in *Arkansas Weekly* builds on the theme introduced last week. This article will not answer every question someone may have about baptism, but if you'll use this article in some way to raise the subject, they might ask *you* (someone they know!) a question they have on the subject. With or without this article, find a way to help someone who is lost to think on things above this week!

### Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Noleka Hopper, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, and new Christians among us.

*Join us each Sunday at 10AM (classes), 10:45AM, & 5PM and Wednesday at 7PM.*

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# The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

church of Christ--Quail Valley

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## *Attitudes*

Arthur M. Ogden

Often when discussing a question of some importance, the remark is made, "I don't like your attitude." This is one way of saying, "I don't like the way you are looking at the problem. You are looking at it in the wrong way."

There is a right way and a wrong way to look at everything. No one is perfect and everyone is subject to his own human weaknesses, and it is altogether possible that all of us at one time or another have been guilty of looking at things with the wrong attitude.

Whether, or not, I have the right attitude toward a thing may depend upon a number of circumstances. All of us to one degree or another are influenced by environment, education, experience, and desires common to all. Through these we form opinions, prejudices, customs, and convictions which are not easily subsided. These influence our thinking and mold our attitudes.

Our attitude toward the Bible and a discussion of it is patterned in the same way. Through our religious environment, education, experience, and our personal desires we form our opinions, prejudices, convictions, and etc..., and our attitudes toward the scriptures are formed, and more often than not they are the wrong attitudes.

### **Wrong Attitudes**

*An indifferent attitude* is often our possession. It is the result of a do nothing, learn nothing, know nothing, and be nothing atmosphere. As a result, we are unconcerned about truth, do not care what the Bible says, and accept any and everything upon the grounds that it is OK with me. As loneliness is the mother of sin, indifference is the father of all unrighteousness and iniquity in the churches. Let us not be so possessed.

*An attitude of selfishness* often characterizes us, and because of it we often try to interpret scripture in the light of what we want it to say rather than what it says. It is the foundation of denominationalism, the fruit of which can be seen everywhere. An attitude of arrogance sometimes finds its way into our hearts. We feel that we are some special creation of God and that everyone should bow in humble submission before us. It is the attitude of "I am right and I cannot be wrong." This is an abomination unto God (Prov.16:5).

*An attitude of suspicion* deceives us into thinking the other fellow is evil, and nothing he advocates could possibly be right. Because of this attitude many honorable men have been defamed while those who possess it have believed a lie that they might be damned.

### **The Right Attitude**

The proper attitude to possess everyone who approaches a discussion of the Bible is that of humility. By humility we destroy our own will (Luke 9:23), and recognize God as our Superior and others as our equals (Phil.2:3). We "study to show ourselves approved unto God . . . rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim.2:15), and once we have learned the truth, we will meekly receive it and obey it (Jas.1:21, 22). With this attitude, we can always, without exception, come to a knowledge of the truth. Try it, and see for yourselves.

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### ***One Who Sows Discord*** (John R. Gibson)

“These six things **the LORD hates**, Yes, seven are **an abomination to Him**: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness who speaks lies, And **one who sows discord among brethren.**” Prov. 6:16-19 (Emphasis mine, JRG)

We can be moved to a righteous indignation when we hear about the shedding of innocent blood and we are often repulsed by even the thought of that unnatural act called homosexuality (Rom. 1:26, 27), but do we see causing division and strife among brethren as the abomination it is? Do we properly appreciate how often the New Testament exhorts the children of God to be united as brothers? Read carefully the following sampling of God’s plan for His children.

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Cor. 1:10

“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Eph. 4:3

“Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” Phil. 2:2

How can Christians who otherwise appear so faithful sometimes be so unconcerned about the unity of the brethren? Why are they so willing to create dissension through their murmuring about the way things are done, the decisions the elders make, the way someone leads singing, etc.? There are likely many reasons, but in so many cases the first thing on the list of things hated by God, i.e. the proud look, is inseparably linked to the last thing, i.e. the sowing of discord among brethren.

Consider the Old Testament story of Absalom. This proud young man, the son of David, used his good looks and smooth ways to create division within Israel (2 Sam. 14-19). Absalom’s pride and the ensuing division cost many their lives and led to great sorrow for many, including his own father. Today, while pride and the desire to create a following will rarely cost anyone their physical life, as happened to Absalom and many others, it will bring sorrow to a church and cost people their souls. If we are to avoid a worse punishment than that suffered by Absalom, we must make certain we are not guilty of allowing our pride to lead to the sowing of discord among our brothers and sisters, the children of God Almighty.

Do we appreciate unity as we should? Do we abhor division the way God does? If so, lets...

- Swallow our own personal pride, humble ourselves in God’s sight, and do everything for the glory of God and not self. 1 Pet. 5:5, 6; 1 Cor. 10:31—11:1
- Recommit ourselves to stirring up love and good works. Heb. 10:24, 25
- Have the spirit of submission to the elders that allows them to watch for our souls with joy. Heb. 13:17
- Avoid the kind of whispering that separates brethren and friends. Prov. 16:28
- Refrain from questioning the motives of people or assigning the worst possible motive to every action. 1 Cor. 13:7

All division is not sin, for our Lord Himself said that He came to bring division with His teachings and demands for commitments to the Father’s will (Matt. 10:34-37), but before we create any friction or faction among God’s people we had better think long and hard about our motives. Love for truth and love for the souls of those deceived by lies may require division from those teaching and practicing things not found in God’s word, but far too often claims of love for the truth are a thin disguise for a pride that seeks a greater sense of importance.

“These...things **the LORD hates**, Yes,...are **an abomination to Him**: A **proud look**, ...And **one who sows discord among brethren.**”

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