

RIGHT AND WRONG

In 2008, 230 young adults (ages 18-23) were asked basic moral questions (lying, cheating, etc; *NY Times* 9-12-11). They said things like “It’s personal...who am I to say?” or “I would do what I thought made me happy or how I felt. I have no other way of knowing what to do but how I internally feel.” Fewer people today know what is right or wrong—do you? How?

Speaking to the Holy Father, Jesus said *Your word is truth* (John 17:17). God has given all people the same truth. The idea that God does not care whether we have the same beliefs about marriage, salvation, or worship is false and destroys the desire and work needed for unity. When God’s word is the foundation of belief, the result is unity in truth.

Feelings do not prove what is right or wrong. Saul felt compelled to offer a sinful sacrifice (1 Sam. 13:12). Feelings are a response to life, not a guide for life. The Holy Spirit gave truth by words, not feelings, when He spoke to the holy apostles and prophets (Ephesians 3:5). Only when we read and understand those words, do we learn truth from the Holy Spirit and know right from wrong. (Contact us with your comments or questions)

-- *Editor’s Note:* What may seem obvious to us, may not be so obvious to people whose minds and lives are mostly spent working, playing, and resting with little attention to spiritual things. Find this article in *Arkansas Weekly* and make use of it consistent with your ability.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & 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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"TEACH TOLERANCE"

Joe R. Price (www.bibleanswer.com/ssword.htm 9-2-12)

Someone put a door hanger on the church building’s door knob with a photo of planet earth. It said, “One Planet, One People”. On the back it said, “Protect your religious freedoms – Support separation of church and state”. Whoever left it on the door then wrote, “*Teach Tolerance*”.

I’m sorry I was not here when it was left at the door. I would have liked to ask what type of tolerance we were being urged to teach. After all, we cannot tolerate some things.

We cannot teach tolerance for relative truth. Who shall we turn to for the truth about teaching tolerance? Shall we rely on the person who hung the flyer on the door for the truth about tolerance? Or, perhaps we should rely on a politician, a philosopher or ourselves. The Bible says, “Buy the truth and do not sell it” (Prov. 23:23). According to Jesus, God’s word is truth: “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (Jno. 17:17). We dare not go beyond what is written by inspiration without incurring the wrath of God who gave us His truth (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 4:6; Gal. 1:8-9). We cannot tolerate the notion that there is no definite standard of moral authority. There is a standard of truth that came from God by which we must live our lives in order to have His approval (Col. 3:17; Matt. 7:21). That is what we will teach.

We cannot teach tolerance for moral sin. God’s word is clear in advancing moral purity in our attitudes and in the way we live. The Bible teaches us to purify our hearts and to keep ourselves pure (Jas. 4:8; 1 Tim. 5:22). It identifies the works of the flesh as sinful defilement (Gal. 5:19-21). It identifies the lusts of the flesh and of the eyes, along with pride, as sins that are against the love of God (1 Jno. 2:15-17). We cannot tolerate immorality. It dishonors God and mankind (Rom. 1:18-32). That is what we will teach.

(continued inside)

We cannot teach tolerance for doctrinal error. It matters what we teach, that is for sure. Some do not think so. They are comfortable with sincerity and conscience being their guide. They silently stand by as false teaching spreads unchallenged. Nevertheless, the New Testament of Christ says we must speak and hold fast to sound doctrine (1 Tim. 1:10; Titus 1:9; 2:1). Some “will not endure sound doctrine”, but faithful followers of Jesus Christ are not among that number (2 Tim. 4:3-5). Christians are taught to “note” and “avoid” those “who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned” (Rom. 16:17). We cannot tolerate false doctrine. It contradicts the faith that has been delivered to us by the apostles and prophets of Christ (Jude 3). That is what we will teach.

We cannot teach tolerance for ecumenism. The Bible does not say it does not matter what you believe as long as you are sincere. In sincere ignorance Saul of Tarsus consented to the persecution and death of Christians (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:12-16). His sin was great, but God was merciful and forgave him – not because he was sincere while sinning, but because he repented and obeyed the gospel of Jesus (Acts 9:6-18; 22:16). The religions of men are based on human philosophies and not upon the will of Christ. Consisting of “the traditions of men”, they are incapable of saving souls from sin and death (Col. 2:8, 20-23). We cannot tolerate the “empty deceit” of “agreeing to disagree” (Eph. 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:14-18). That is what we will teach.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW BIRTH

Keith Greer

No Bible subject has been more misunderstood than the “new birth”. The phrase “born again”, which is a Bible concept, has been twisted and perverted to the point many brethren shy away from using it. Let us allow the Scriptures to explain this great truth.

“Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’” {John 3:5} How is one born of the “water and spirit”? The work of the Spirit brought us the word, which one must obey to be “born again”.

“Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.” {1 Peter 1:23} Remember, seed produces “after its own kind.”

What takes away man’s sins? The blood of Christ of course. Revelation 1:5; Ephesians 1:7. How does one contact that blood?

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were

baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” {Romans 6:3, 4} Dead to sin, buried in water, arises to walk in newness of life.

Something else takes place when one submits to being “born again.” Three changes take place in one’s life.

CONDITION. A person goes from being lost to a saved condition. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” {Romans 3:23} What happens when I sin? “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” {Romans 6:23}

The new birth changes this condition. “Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” {2 Timothy 2:10}

RELATIONSHIP. When one is “born again” they enjoy a new relationship. From one who was an alien to a child of God.

“And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled” {Colossians 1:20, 21} Now one is in the family of God and He is their Father.

STATE. One goes from a dead state to a living one, spiritually speaking. “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.” {Ephesians 5:1, 2}

“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord” {Romans 6:11}

Outside of Christ one is walking in “death”—separated from God by their sins. Obedience to God’s plan gives one “life”.

Do you understand why the term being “born again” is an important one? The new birth changes our condition, relationship and state. Can the physical birth accomplish these three things? Being born physically does not place one in the family of God. It does not change their condition for they are without sin. Since they are without sin they are alive and not dead. Isn’t the “new birth” a wonderful thing?

Thanks be to God that He loved us enough to allow us to be adopted into His family and receive an eternal inheritance. (www.bibleanswer.com/ssword.htm 9-30-12)