

Genderless Toy Sections & American “Tolerance”

David Halbrook

Last week we noted the trend of genderless toy sections and noted that a root of this is the heavy emphasis on “tolerance” in our society. Today, think about how man-made religion contributes to this problem.

A “pastor” said this in *Christianity Today* (June 2010, p38-40; a magazine begun by Billy Graham) about diverse teachings on divorce, eternal salvation security, second baptism of the Holy Spirit, and worship, “We accept the differences as a richness. It would be very boring if all the churches were the same. Imagine if God made just one flower; that would be boring.” Do differences matter? Did Jesus and His apostles praise different teachings on these topics? Their one message would produce the *same mind and the same judgment* (1 Cor. 1:10; 4:17), but people today thank God for many kinds of churches (which exist because of contradictory teachings). Churches today, like our society, pride themselves on how tolerant they are. People who ignore significant differences are part of the problem that aids the process of our society having toy departments and bathrooms that are “genderless.”

Before it is too late, pursue truth and do not tolerate sin.

Editor’s Note: This follow-up to last week’s article in *Arkansas Weekly* reminds us not to be conformed to this world because the world’s mindset goes further than most people realize it will go. Maybe it also help someone to see how far they, or others, have already gone.

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Ed & Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Noleka Hopper, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, new Christians among us, and Ben Calderon with whom we fellowship (share) as he works in Conway. Also, we are helping Ron Halbrook on his current travels in the Philippines and Australia

Joyce Ratliff continues recovering from her hip replacement.

Our fall gospel meeting with Donnie Rader is September 13-18.

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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Everyday Holiness

Philip Stuckey

Jesus spoke several parables to His disciples about the nature and growth of the kingdom. One of these was the parable of the leaven. Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened” (Matt. 13:33). This parable shows how the kingdom’s growth will be pervasive though not always obvious, much the way leaven permeates dough until all of it is leavened.

One of the things this parable brings to mind is that the influence of the gospel can be spread in what are perceived by many as small and seemingly insignificant things. It is easy to lose sight that much of what we do together in the assemblies of the church are designed to not only worship and glorify God, but to edify us and equip us to go and live godly lives (Eph. 4:11-16). It is outside the assemblies where we spend the majority of our time. Outside the assembly we must be diligent in putting our faith into practice.

Thus it is in the small things we do each and every day where we can have a great deal of influence. We awake to each new day and spend time with our family, spouses, and children having breakfast and getting ready for work or school. We interact with others around town, at work, and in other places as we go through the day. These are the places where we become salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16). Here in these acts of everyday holiness we demonstrate whether or not we “have been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

When we live consistently according to our profession, day in and day out, the gospel can have its leavening influence in the lives of those who cross our paths. If we remain steadfast and patient our labor will produce a great harvest (Is. 55:10-11). Let us not neglect to walk worthy every day keeping in mind that the seemingly small and mundane tasks of life are great opportunities to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Without Hope

Matt Adams

Every life you meet today is going through some trial. Everyone you see has issues that they must confront on a daily basis, some great and some small; yet even the smallest of issues in our lives can seem insurmountable and make us feel like we have the weight of the world on our shoulders. Everyone has the opportunity to be freed from that weight, but not everyone takes advantage of that opportunity (**Matt.11:28-30**).

Think about your own struggles; it can be seriously difficult some days to just make it through, can't it? However, if you're a Christian, think of the joy and peace you have because you can take it all to the Lord in prayer with the confidence He will hear you (**Jms.5:16; Phil.4:4-7**). Recognize how you're even able to make it through each day, and who gives you the strength to face and overcome the issues of life. Think of the hope you have, that hope of eternal life, if you will but persevere faithfully to the end (**Rev.2:10; Phil.3:12-14**). Hold on to that and recognize how blessed you are if you're truly being faithful to God. Let that lift your spirits and help you to press on serving Him the rest of your days, let come what may. Through our Lord, we can not only face the issues of life; no, more than that, we can conquer them (**Rom.8:37-39**)! What a tremendous blessing!

Now, think for a moment what it would be like to have none of this. Think of what it would be like to go through life without hope, without the assurance of heaven, without the peace that comes from praying to our Lord and knowing He will hear and answer. Think deeply of the impact of being separated eternally from God, instead spending eternity in a devil's hell "where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched" (**Mk.9:42-50; Rev.21:6-8**).

Do we have that overwhelming flood of despair and trembling within when we consider this reality, this promise from God to the disobedient? Do we tremble at the thought of how that used to be, and still could be, us (**1 Cor.6:9-11; 1Cor.10:12; Rom.6:1-11**)? Good. We need to tremble at this thought.

Now, apply that to every soul you meet today who is walking around without the Lord. Think of every person who has either not heard or not obeyed the word of God; tremble for their souls. That's a lot of lost souls, my friends. So, so many dying and dead in their sins. What effect does this knowledge have on you and me? Do you tremble, does your heart break for them?

Yet, what do we do?

Do we walk around selfishly keeping that hope and peace within, refusing to extend that blessing to others, giving ourselves the false hope that we're saved when in

reality we're condemned for not speaking the truth in love to them? Do we claim love for God, but then refuse to give others what they need the most - the saving message of Jesus Christ? Do we call ourselves Christians, but yet refuse to hold ourselves and others accountable to the standard which He set?

Consider this: "When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul." **Ezekiel 33:8-9 NKJV**

And this: "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" **Matthew 28:18-20 NKJV**

It is evident from these verses that we have a lot of work to do, friends. Knowing God's word as we do, do we honestly think God will let us slide if we refuse to take the saving message of the gospel to the lost?

We have a responsibility to teach the truth, the hearers have a responsibility to obey it. It is incumbent upon all of us that we carry the gospel to the lost and that we follow it diligently ourselves; for if we do not, we shall surely be lost eternally. Give others hope, give them the opportunity to have salvation, give them the words of life, show no partiality, demonstrate your love to God and all of His creation by spreading the gospel. Save your own soul, and strive to save the souls of others. Knowing what we know, knowing what our Savior did for us all, how can we *not* speak about Him (**Acts 4:19-20**)? The world will hate us, the world will speak ill of us, but our Lord will be pleased if we will but humbly obey Him. Serve God faithfully and spread the message of Jesus Christ to all until this life is over, then go home to your reward. May the following hymn convict us and move us to action:

You Never Mentioned Him To Me:

When in the better land before the bar we stand, how deeply grieved our souls will be; If any lost one there should cry in deep despair, *You never mentioned Him to me.*

O let us spread the word where e'er it may be heard, help groping souls the light to see, That yonder none may say, *You showed me not the way. You never mentioned Him to me.*

A few sweet words may guide a lost one to His side, or turn sad eyes on Calvary; So work as days go by, that yonder none may cry, *You never mentioned Him to me.*

CHORUS: "You never mentioned Him to me, You helped me not the light to see; You met me day by day and knew I was astray, Yet never mentioned Him to me."