
THE WAY THAT SEEMS RIGHT

UNDERSTANDING THE DANGER OF REPEATEDLY DOING WHAT SEEMS RIGHT TO US

“THERE IS A WAY THAT SEEMS RIGHT TO A MAN,
BUT ITS END IS THE WAY OF DEATH.”

~ PROV. 14:12; 16:25 ~

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I cannot find the words that adequately express the urgency with which this is written. Hopefully, the content will do it justice. I write this knowing that the destiny of individual lives, families, ministries, churches, and nations are at stake.

My wife forwarded me an article taken from *The Oberlin Evangelist* that recorded a sermon given by Revivalist and President Charles G. Finney of Oberlin College, in Ohio, USA, dated July 6, 1859.

I will begin this article with one of the statements that Mr. Finney began his sermon:

“We must first inquire what is meant by ‘seeming to be right.’”

This phrase indicates that the way that seems right to us and what is truly right are not equal in quality or in what they produce. We can further soundly conclude that if the way that seems right produces death then the true way will produce life. One can also identify which way they have embraced by taking a candid, honest, and sincere look at the aftermath of their relationships with people, the stewardship of their money and wealth, the training of their children, their business practices, and, their use of authority within their homes, churches, and civil governments.

Commercial airline inspectors and mechanics cannot nonchalantly check off everything on their list and stamp their “ok” on a jet plane because it seems right to them. On the contrary, they have exact guidelines they must follow because of the value placed on human life and the liability involved with any neglect on their part. So it is with Church leadership. All that we do must have God’s throne-room stamp of approval on it. We cannot neglect to do what is required by God. Our thinking, fears, feelings, likes or dislikes, and partiality cannot dictate or hinder our making the right decisions.

You have probably heard it said or may have said something similar to this: “I’ve tried my best to be a good Christian” or “We prayed and prayed but God didn’t seem to hear us” or “I’m doing all that I know to do.” Well, King David gave something *his* best shot. Let’s see what the results were (2 Sam. 5-7).

He learned the hard way by doing things that seemed right to him instead of seeking God’s way when he attempted to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. He got someone killed. When David responded with anger, he possibly thought, “Lord, here I was doing You and Israel a great favor and You killed the guy that was trying to help me. What do You want from me?” What did David learn from this?

- † He finally realized that the only way to restore the Ark was exactly the way that God had already prescribed and not the way that seems right.
- † That the excitement of the moment or meeting a present need should never determine the means, the timing, the people God will use, nor how a certain thing is to be accomplished.
- † Neither our knowledge and feelings, our familiarity, or our personal history with a person or thing gives us the authority or right to do what seems right to us in the nature of the case. Familiarity breeds either partiality (bias) or contempt. It can be used against us to keep us from properly valuing and understanding God’s ways which always accomplish the greatest good for all.
- † David learned that he must always seek out the heart of God—that it takes more than zeal and passion to accomplish what God desires. Only then will he have God’s full favor on his efforts.
- † No matter how noble or justified, our seemingly well-intended efforts are, they often serve only self or other people’s interests and not God’s.

The new cart David picked to transfer the Ark exemplified human ingenuity and creativity but it was not in line with God’s directives and so the results were disastrous. God can use our ingenuity and creativity as long as we are first operating within the boundaries of His commands. David learned the hard way what it truly means to fear God.

David understood God's heart (what He desired to do) but fell short of his ways. He understood and had a passion for God's intended goal or vision, which was the restoration of Ark of the Covenant to its rightful place, but failed to seek God as to how to do it.

Perhaps David saw it as an opportunity to prove his calling to the people or to win back their favor because of the disgrace Saul had brought upon the throne. Whatever the case, he allowed something to distract him from the purpose for restoration of the Ark. It symbolized the restoration of God's blessing and favor to Israel and was all about God's honor and no one else's.

Never blame the devil or anyone else for what your foolishness has caused. God is not obligated to fulfill His promises to those who do not meet His conditions.

Any neglect on my part to openly admit and correct my own failures at leadership within my family would allow seeds of distrust to develop and undermine my relationship with them.

King David restored the people's faith in his competence as king by: 1) not allowing himself to become discouraged from doing what he knew God wanted done, and 2) stepping back from the situation, seeking out God's correct way and then eventually, in God's timing, doing it accordingly, and by 3) by not making his reputation before the people the priority. Instead, he obtained the understanding that would secure God's favor and anointing and would ultimately restore the people's trust in his leadership. David did what King Saul failed to do. Saul made his reputation before the people his priority and, thereby, lost his place as king. He ended up seeing David as a threat and persecuting those whom he should have been praising.

Those who make God's honor, ways, and favor their utmost priority will never have to be concerned about their honor before and favor with the people.

Those leaders who desire respect (and who believe they lack respect) from their people should thoroughly first make sure that they respect God's ways above what seems right to them.

"The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, and *before* [preceding] *honor* [respect from any source] *is humility*" (Prov. 15:33).

The fear of the Lord is not only the beginning of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom but is also the end of our foolishness (Prov. 1:7, 8:13, 9:10).

One thing I look for in people who look to my leadership is whether or not they trust my ability to do things God's way. Have I done things that have undermined their trust in

my leadership? Have I made life more difficult for them because of my foolishness, proven by failure to seek out and understand God's ways instead of doing what seems right? Do I truly know them? Have I pursued relationship/fellowship with them? The best way to find out is to ask them, encouraging them to be completely honest with me. If I truly love the people who God has entrusted to my stewardship, I will value their input and will not be self-protective or self-justifying.

Doing things the way that seems right will cause death to relationships and, ultimately, the abortion of destiny.

Does this scenario describe similar events in your life? God will restore His wisdom, guidance, and clarity to you if you honestly admit that your decisions have been more for the interests of self and other people rather than for God. We must take full responsibility for doing what seems right to us and not doing what serves God's interests. As church/family leaders, this also means that we must take full responsibility for the aftermath of our wrong decisions and not place the blame on others who are suffering because of our presumptuousness and neglect. We cannot blame or become impatient with them if we have lost their favor and trust because of the seeds of death we have sown. We cannot chide them for their lack of cooperation when such was a product of our failure to follow God's protocol. A failure to humble ourselves and repent will bring upon us the full weight of what we have sown. This could mean the end of a church, a ministry, or premature death for some people. Remember what happened to King Saul? We have much greater light than he did.

To the degree that I am in bondage to people, to that degree will my decisions in reference to them be tainted and partial. We are to owe no one anything but the God kind of love (Ro. 13:8). So, if our relationships are based on anything but that, it will greatly influence any decisions we make. We should have no vested interests except to fulfill God's interests, never assuming that we automatically understand what those are. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones" (Prov. 3:5-8).

Today, many people, including Christians, are moved and influenced more by outside information and persuasive influences rather than by God's throne-room information and initiatives. This contributes to their perceiving and filtering things more through the limitations and bias of their thinking, their feelings, and to a mere knowledge of facts rather than by sound wisdom from God. There is no way that we can outwardly obtain all the correct facts about a person, thing, or event. However, if Jesus Christ abides in us, we have a direct link to all the assurance and understanding that we need for any given situation. It's time for the people of God to turn off the radios, televisions, and other

media and tune in to the throne-room of God. It's time to abide in the secret place of the Most High. Only from there will we find the peace, quietness, and assurance that His righteousness brings (Isa. 32:17). Only when we have learned to habitually and continually abide in that atmosphere will we be able to release it into the earth. This is what the earth is waiting for. God is calling us to secure the hope that is a sure and steadfast anchor of our wayward souls to that Presence behind the Veil. That hope is Jesus as our Great High Priest who intercedes for us according to the power of His endless life. In that power rests our entire destiny.

Those Christians who fail to allow their souls to be anchored in peace, quietness, and assurance will be victims or casualties of deception and other people's veiled self-interests.

Those things to which we consistently subject our souls will determine its condition and, ultimately, determine whether or not we are in good health and prospering (3 Jn. 3:2). Our souls must be brought under the lordship of Christ's yoke as the servant "ox" that it was created to be (Mat. 11:27-30).

In an article entitled *Let Peace Rule Your Hearts*, I made reference to a comet named *ELEnin* that was presently traveling through our solar system. There was a lot of hoopla and hype as to its impact on our planet. The Lord made it clear to me that it would not affect our planet in any significant way. Well as of three weeks ago (September 2011), there is evidence that the comet was almost completely taken out by a radiation blast from the sun. It pays to listen to God first because only then can we determine what facts truly reinforce the truth. Not the other way around. God's word is the final word.

All this points to one thing: everything that *originates* from the soul (the mind, will, emotions, and personality) of a person can never give life and serve God's interests. The soul of man can never originate or generate life but must be a carrier or messenger of it. Things originating from us apart from God, including our seemingly good ideas, will only serve our interests and will produce fear, confusion, deception, false security, pride, counterfeit authority, spiritual blindness, distrust, and spiritual barrenness.

Those who cannot sincerely face their past, forsaking all denial, self-justification, and the tendencies to create their own fig leaves, will not qualify to proceed into the future God has planned for them in this life.

I hear this warning from the Lord:

Those leaders who repeatedly subject the people of God to the consequences of doing what seems right to them, catering to their self-interests, are already under chastisement and could face certain and final judgment from God. If they have ignored all the warning signs and rejected the voices of the prophets that he has sent to them, they will reap the full force of their wrong doing. The Lord says that He will no longer endure those who place the many at risk for the sake of the few and have continually spoken their own mind

and have not represented His. Their candlestick will be removed and the only ones who will be left for them to lead are those who are loyal to them. Wisdom is crying out in the streets. Who will heed the call? Come to the secret place of the Most High.

As we press in further toward experiencing the fullness of the glory of God, we can go from faith to faith, strength to strength, and glory to glory. In order for the last days Church to accomplish what God has determined to do, she must spend more time in the secret place of the Most High, soaking in that presence behind the Veil. Jesus is calling us into His life-giving rest away from our soulish labors and demanding activities. In that place, we will find all the keys for provision, deliverance, healing, and much-needed breakthrough.

The End

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