

GETTING BACK TO BASICS

place where we really feel that we may be better and that we now know more than the pure Word of God that we have in the Bible.

It is time for the Body of Christ to truly get back to basics. We have gotten to the place where we think that we must grow from the “mundane” understandings of the Word of God. It is sad to say but the Body of Christ may have gotten to a

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I say this because we are seeing more and more of the church change their thoughts on the pure unadulterated Word of God. We have unfortunately, turn that corner and have begun to change. Not only changing what it actually says in the Bible but also we see ourselves coming to the place where we are actually changing the actual and the pure meaning of what the Word of God was actually saying and giving to us.

Let us be totally clear, the Bible is God’s Word. Many have perverted that pure unadulterated Word of God and have slowly but surely manipulated it and have changed its pure meaning to meet many of man’s desires to make it say what they want it to say and not what God is actually saying.

We see that in many of today’s church meetings, we “dissect” God’s Word by taking one scripture from one place and then another scripture from another place and then another scripture from another place and we put them all together to then make our own understandings and even doctrines within our churches.

Sometimes we may just hear one scripture and then the person speaking goes off onto some other tangent or train of thought than that of what they just read. And...there are those churches, where their leadership do not even read any scriptures and just speak on some kind of philosophical stuff!!!

I am not simply speaking about the main line denominations that have changed and added to or have taken away from the Word of God to make it fit today’s world and today’s thinking. There are many so called “Full Gospel” churches that are doing the same thing. We must get back to the pure unadulterated Word of God as originally found within our Bible.

I guess what I am saying or questioning is this: Is God's Word truly found in God's Word, the Bible, or is it simply a philosophy that is to be changed with the time and the thinking of the era we are in. Let's understand this very fact. The Old Testament or the Hebrew Scriptures have been around for over 5000 years. The New Testament writings have been around for over 2000 years. Both have not changed other than the language that they have been translated to.

Unfortunately, in the past 50-100 years, the Bible has changed with all the different translations. There are over 35-50 different Bible translations and I am not speaking of language translations. I am speaking of textual translations. Wow!!! That is a lot!!!

A friend of mine just recently wrote to me. In essence he wrote that yes, we are in Christ and we are forgiven. However, our flesh and the attacks of satan and his forces of wickedness are on the attack every day. We must not get prideful but rather we must stay in an attitude of lowliness and humility giving thanks to God, every day.

Staying in an attitude of lowliness or humility may seem like a simple thought and a simple desire for the true child of God. However, unfortunately, it is getting far from where the mainstream or main line church is going today.

Unfortunately, we have made God what we want Him to be. We have made God fit into our ways of thinking. We have made God's Word say what we think it should be. Many have retracted and deleted much of the Bible because "someone" made a decision that we don't need those sections of the Bible anymore. We have the audacity to think and believe that we are so past all those things in the Bible. We have gotten to the place where we are beyond the simple truth of the Word of God. WHAT???!!!

Has man evolved to the place where we are so much smarter than God that we have the audacity to change and even delete any part or sections of His Word. We must realize that Jesus is the Word!!! If we delete or take away any part of the Word of God, we are taking Jesus away from us!!! I think sometimes we forget that.

The above way of thinking is where pride and a haughty way of thinking has gotten much of the church to fall into a bad place in this hour. This is no surprise. If you truly and honestly look into the full Word of God, you will see, especially in the New Testament, that this was told to the church. We read in the scriptures that this would happen. It actually started very early in the Body of Christ. As I had mentioned, the writers of the New Testament wrote to the Body of Christ to watch out for this.

The Apostle John was very much in tune with understanding this ungodly movement. He wrote his last three letters to encourage the church to return to their “first love” and not be taken in by those false teachers and false prophets. Those false teachers were teaching the Body of Christ a different teaching than that in which Jesus had brought forth and the Apostles were bringing forth.

We read Jude’s letter, in which he wanted to write of the our “*common salvation*.” However, he changed his mind because **it was needful** as he writes, “... *it was **needful for me** to write unto you, and exhort you that **ye should earnestly contend for the faith** which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (Jude 3-4)

The other writers of the New Testament letters also exhort the believer to be aware of such deceptions and false teachings that were coming into the church. This was an invasion by the enemy, the devil and his forces of wickedness, to come and pervert the Word of God and cause many believers to be turned from the truth and be taken away captive into these false and misleading teaching and doctrines.

Paul writes to Timothy to encourage him to be aware of the “*doctrines of demons*.” In 1Timothy 4:1,2 Paul declares to this young leader of the church as he states, “*Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron...*”

Satan started this attack on God and His Word from the very beginning in the Garden of Eden. In the Garden, Eve encountered these “doctrines of demons” as the serpent spoke to her. We read in Genesis 3:1 that the serpent said to the woman, “...*Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*” She began listening to the devil. She gave place to the enemy. That was her first mistake.

At the beginning of the conversation, Satan questioned the teaching and the Word of God. Remember that the Word of God was, and still is, actually Jesus. As they continued to talk, he substituted his own teaching for God’s. Eve and Adam believed the lies. The same is happening today. Unfortunately, the outcome will be the same. Adam and Eve fell...so shall those that believe those same lying spirits.

Just as Adam and Eve gave way to the strategy of the enemy, it is the same thing for us today. The enemy is always trying to tell us that there is a better way than what God and His Word has given us from the very beginning. What it all comes down to is the same attitude of heart that the devil has with God. That attitude is that dreadful attitude that is known as **pride**.

The Apostle John writes to us in 1John 2:16 the three main aspects of sin. He writes, “*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and **the pride of life**, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*” The “world” is symbolically saying and represents all that is in the devil’s domain, which is this world.

It is full of sin. The “lust of the flesh’ and the ‘lust of the eyes” are very much the cause of sin in this world. However, the “pride of life” is a subtle sin that can also affect many within the Body of Christ. Sometimes, believers can get so very prideful in their walk and in being blessed by their God that we can get to a place of becoming haughty and yes, even prideful.

Humility and being humble is the very opposite of being prideful. Let’s take a quick look at what pride is. The Biblical definition of “pride” is that it is an arrogance, an excellency, a majestic pomp, a “swelling” of the head. It is a feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction that comes from your **own** achievements. It puts you as #1 and puts God somewhere down on your list of importance and priorities. You give no credit to anyone else, especially God. It is all about...you!!!

We see this portrayed in the parable of the rich man that is found in Luke 12:16-21. You can read this parable on your own. We see that this rich man was rich and became even richer. However, this rich man did not realize where his blessing had come from. He took this blessing for granted. It became all about himself.

He began to build and hoard up his wealth and use it for his own comfort. Pride had entered in. He did not realize or perhaps he did not even want to consider that his blessing came from God. No, it was all about him. But...sooner or later what is really important will be seen. The wealth means nothing when it is time for you to meet the one and only God. Hmm.....

There are many, many scriptures that speak of "pride" and being proud. Below are just a few:

- Proverbs 8:13 - "*The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: **pride**, and **arrogance**, and the evil way, and the cursing mouth, do I hate.*" The Lord cannot stand to be around pride and arrogance. It is a detestable attitude of heart. We reverence God (fear the Lord) when we detest the evil things just as our God does.
- Proverbs 16:18 - "**Pride** goes before destruction, and a **haughty** spirit before a fall."
- Mark 7:21-23 - "*For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, **pride**, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*"
- ... there are many, many more...

The aspect of pride in simple terms is the very opposite of what the attitude of heart should be to the child of God. Yes, we are to be so very blessed and joyful that we are children of God. Yes, we know, that as children of God we are to be blessed in this life. More importantly, we have eternal life with God both in heaven and then in the New Jerusalem forever, and ever.

However, it all starts here and now with the correct attitude of heart. We must be humble before our God. Yes, we are blessed. Yes, we have joy unspeakable and full of glory. And yes, many of our needs can and will be met by the living God. However, even if He does not give us all that we think we may need or all that we think we may want, we are still so very, very blessed. Why? Simply because we have eternal life!!!

So what is the Biblical definition of being humble and living a life of humility? Well, the best way we can define this is simply by looking at the life of our Savior and Lord, Jesus. He was the epitome of humility and humbleness. Yet, He was able to be victorious in every one of the situations that He was in as He walked this earth.

Jesus tried to teach His followers back then and His people today, what the lifestyle of a child of God truly is. God calls and desires all of His people to a life of humility. How do we live that humble life in a culture that celebrates self-promotion and personal gain? Well, we must look at Jesus.

Jesus is the perfect example for anyone trying to live with a humble heart. We can never do this in and through ourselves. We must be first truly born again. It is only through the power and life changing attitude of heart that comes from being born again in and through Jesus and then being filled with the Holy Spirit that we can begin to live in that Christlike humility.

Living a “humble life” means more than just copying Jesus’ actions. It requires a **change in how we think and act**. It is a change of heart, within the true child of God. C.S. Lewis once said, “Humility isn’t thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less.” It’s putting the needs of others before our own. We must understand that humility isn’t just a nice idea — it is a way of life. It is a lifestyle!!!

The definition of humility and humbleness is that it refers to having a meekness, lowliness, and **absence of self**. The Greek word translated “humility” in Colossians 3:12 and elsewhere literally means “lowliness of mind.” Therefore, humility is a **heart attitude**, not merely an outward demeanor. We can only walk in true humility and be humble within ourselves only if you are truly born again. It can only happen with a born again spirit. Wow!!!

We cannot try to do it on our own. Why? Simply because that is not who an unsaved person is. They can try and they may even look like they are very humble. Let’s face it, Mahatma Ghandi was a very gentle man and he walked in humility. However, he was not born again so therefore he failed. He looked good. He was a good example for the unsaved but he was not the epitome of a humble life and life style. The only one who truly was able to witness this to the world was Jesus.

Our example must be Jesus and His Word as found within the Bible. An example of this is found in Luke 18:10-14. My friend who I mentioned earlier in this essay, brought this scripture to my attention, as well. The scripture reads, *“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted.”*

This parable shows us the difference between false humility and the real thing. The Pharisee looked religious and sounded religious but his heart was far from God. It was all about the appearance of “looking holy.”

The tax collector recognized his sinfulness and his unworthiness. He approaches God with a contrite heart and receives forgiveness. Jesus was contrasting man’s pride with that of true humility and humbleness. The pride and self-righteousness of a Pharisee, a religious leader who should have known better, is seen and the humble heart of the tax collector is also revealed. Who went home justified? Hmm.....

Man may not recognize the difference but God knows it right away. It is not what we do, but it is all about the true attitude of heart that the individual has. 1Peter 5:6,7 tells us, *“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he cares for you.”* We must yield ourselves to God and His ways, His desires and His purposes for our lives. Why? So that He can exalt you.

That exaltation may come, not here on this earth, but it may come when we are with Him in heaven. We need to just cast all our cares, all our needs, all our concerns upon Him because our God truly cares so very, very much for each one of His children. However, we must first learn to humble ourselves under God’s hand, under His control.

Just prior to these verses, 1Peter 5:5, we are told that we are, “...*be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.*” We are to be clothed, or in other words, we are to be covered with humbleness and humility. We are to wear it. It is to be a part of that garment of righteousness that every believer is now wearing as a true child of God.

Discussing and reviewing humbleness and humility may seem to be old school. It is not necessarily something that is often spoken of in today’s church world these days. However, I believe it is vital to the lifestyle of the true child of God today. Yes, we may, under the power and leading of the Holy Spirit be able to do great and marvelous works of God in this hour. However, we must never forget that it is really our God who is doing the works.

We are just the “middle person” who God may give the blessing to be used by Him in doing His wonderful works. And for that we must truly thank our God for choosing to use us. Ultimately, however, we must continually, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, be pointing people to Jesus who in turn will continually point them to the Father. It must be all about our God – the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit – not us!!!