

Plain Path

Weekly newsletter of the Fry Road church of Christ

Sunday, April 13, 2014

Volume 19, Number 15

“Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path... Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart” (Psalm 27:11-14)

WHAT DO RULES MEAN TO YOU?

by Bob Pulliam

Many years ago, Marilyn and I went on our annual journey to my parents' house in Arizona with the children. We would always make a McDonald's Playland stop in Fort Stockton, Texas to let the kids stretch. While there, a group of teenagers from South Carolina decided they would go out and play on the playground (although they were clearly larger than the rules

allowed). It wasn't long before they were more than I was going to take. I pointed out that they had run the little kids out of the equipment and that they needed to get out. They did so, but the grumbling would have rivaled the Israelites in the wilderness. Their main complaint was that I didn't work there. I was quick to point out the large statement of rules that stood at the entrance to the playground.

You could see and read it from twenty yards: No one over four feet in height. They never could seem to see, and some got back into the equipment. A moment later, the manager emerged and asked the violators if they could read (which I thought was a great question in view of my previous encounter with them). This put an end to their romping at that location; but didn't end the grumbling.

Here is an important question: Does it really matter who points out the rules? The teenagers from South Carolina thought it mattered. But weren't they still grumbling when the manager asked them to leave? You see, it didn't matter who pointed out the rules. The irritation was not with the one who made truth known; it was the dislike for the rules themselves. Where religion is concerned it is no different. People grumble when I preach the truth. What the Bible says should carry great weight, because it is the inspired word of God (II Tim 3:16f; II Cor 2:9 - 12), and contains all we need to know about God's rules (Jd 3; II Pt 1:3; Prov
(Rules, continued on pg 2...)

Gospel Meeting Beginning Today!

- Sunday:** 9:30 AM - What Happened to the Church Jesus Built (Mt 16)
10:30 AM - Jesus Is the Head of What?!
6:00 PM - WWJD? or WDJS?
- Monday:** 7:30 pm - How Do We Know What Jesus Wants Us to Do?
- Tuesday:** 10:00 am - Does Jesus Care How We Worship Him?
7:30 pm - What Kind of Church Did Jesus Build?
- Wednesday:** 7:30 pm - The Un-Denomination

Our speaker will be Steve Wolfgang

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(Rules, continued from pg 1...)

29:18). The grumbling is not an inability to see the rules; it is an attempt to divert wrong-doing from themselves to anyone they can find (usually the one who pointed out the rules). They explain away what the Bible says, but then when we show them it's clear, true intention, they complain and grumble. Paul experienced this attitude with the Galatians. "Have I therefore become your enemy by telling you the truth?", he asked (Gal 4:16). In reality, the problem was not the messenger. The problem was with their attitude toward truth.

Now consider the words of Jesus for a moment: "This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men."

(Mt 15:8f) Teaching (and observing) the commandments of men make worship vain. In other words, the commandments (rules, if you will) of God are to be observed. If we don't, then we cannot be pleasing to God. If I preach that from the pulpit, people doubt the validity and my sincerity. And when they read it out of their own Bible, they refuse to conclude that these sobering words could have anything to do with their practices. But if you cannot find your practices in scripture, then how could they be anything other than the doctrines of men? Perhaps I hear grumbling as they leave the playground.

Let me ask you what your

church believes and practices. Is it concerned with following the New Testament pattern, or is the Bible just a general guide to use in inventing new churches. If it is just a general guide, then Matthew 15:8-9 has little bite to it. And let's face it, new churches are springing up on every corner in Katy, Houston, and the world. It isn't enough to claim that you follow Jesus. The "rules" of His kingdom are clear. Actually, obeying Him is where the rubber meets the road (Mt 7:21-23). That is our concern here at Fry Road. We don't just want to talk about serving faithfully. We want to "walk the walk" of faithful service. If you share that desire, let's study together.



THIS WEEK'S DAILY BIBLE READINGS

NEW TESTAMENT
READING

MARK 5 - 8

April 13 - 15

OLD TESTAMENT
READING

EXODUS 27 - 33

April 16 - 19

I TIMOTHY 4:13

When Apologies Fail to Measure Up

by Bob Pulliam

If you've lived many years upon this earth, and have never apologized to someone, I must admit that I find that distressing. You may be able to admit that you are not perfect, but that does nothing to make amends for the harm you have done to others. Even if it is as simple as having sinned with your tongue, a simple "I'm sorry" is needed.

But it isn't uncommon to find apologies couched with modifiers that negate the effect of admitting fault. These modifiers are an insult that we must avoid when presenting ourselves as humble and contrite. Look closely at the following two cases and consider their effect. Then make sure you never indulge in their use.

"I'm Sorry If..."

Perhaps the most common is the "if" apology. Jake has gone to Duke and told him that he hurt his feelings by a very unkind remark. So Duke says, "I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings." By saying "if", Duke has denied the certainty of the claim that Jake's feelings were hurt. Jake said his feelings were hurt. Why would anyone doubt what he claims. It's like saying, "I doubt the validity of your claim, but if it's so, then I'm sorry."

Now I want to know why we can't be contrite about this and say something like, "I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking, and I let my tongue get the best of me." It's called taking responsibility and

(Apologies, continued on pg 3...)

FAMILY NEWS & NOTES

News and Notes of Interest
to Fry Road Members

Because of the large number of visitors to our services, we would ask those wishing to identify with the congregation to do so by expressing this interest directly to the elders.

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

Gospel Meeting (Steve Wolfgang) V.B.S. ("We Would See Jesus")
April 13 - 16, 2014 June 23 - 26, 2014

Annual Singing September 6, 2014 Gospel Meeting (Joseph Casimier)
September 7 - 10, 2014

Sick and Shut-Ins

Sections have been removed to preserve members' privacy

Angels Rejoicing...

Grief Stricken

Sermons:

Next Sunday:

When It's Time...

Tonight:

WWJD, or WDJS?

(Apologies, continued from pg 2...)

fixing our mistakes. You bring my sin to my attention, and I fix it rather than soften my responsibility.

"I'm Sorry But..."

Also quite common is the "but" apology. In the example above, Duke might say, "I'm sorry, but I have an Irish temper that gets the best of me." What did Duke say? Yes, he said that he was sorry, but he also said that he'll do it again if the circumstances repeat themselves. I have a bit of the Ire in me from my mother's side. But I do my best to master it, and never use it as a justification for my words or actions.

At times, someone may provoke you in some way. They may have gotten you all stirred up in a very unkind way. However, they are not responsible for your sins. "I'm sorry, but you started it.", is not an acceptable apology. Self defense is not an acceptable way of excusing your participation in a brawl of words. All you're doing is throwing fuel on the fire (Prov 26:21). You need to learn fire prevention practices when dealing with others (see Prov 15:1).

Conclusion...

Think carefully about your relationship with brethren. If you hold that sacred fellowship in light esteem, then you look upon your place in the body of Christ as a common thing. If the body of Christ is not that important to you, then how could it's head, Jesus Christ, be important to you? We are to seek each other's edification and benefit. We cannot do that while we refuse to acknowledge our faults and fail to prove ourselves humble in dealing with each other.



FOR THE RECORD

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

MONTHLY ASSIGNMENTS

Sections have been removed to preserve members' privacy

IN KEEPING WITH OUR LONG STANDING AGREEMENT, THOSE SERVING PUBLICLY ARE REMINDED TO PLEASE DRESS IN A MANNER RESPECTFUL OF THE GOD WHOM WE SERVE.

ELDERS:

Ruben Amador
Matthew Heaton
Donnie Mangrum
Steve Voss



DEACONS:

John Coleman	Ken Dunsmore
David Ellison	Ray Farrell
Aubrey Garner	Steve Geraci
Steve LaGrasta	John Light
Steven Martin	Mike McMurray
Jason Mock	David Stevenson
Glenn Tomblin	

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Classes	9:30 AM
Sunday Morning Assembly	10:30 AM
Sunday Evening Assembly	6:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Classes	7:30 PM

EVANGELIST & EDITOR:

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