

Plain Path

Weekly newsletter of the Fry Road church of Christ

Sunday, October 5, 2014

Volume 19, Number 40

“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)

“I’M NOT RELIGIOUS, I JUST LOVE THE LORD!”

by Warren Berkley

I SAW THIS PRINTED on a car bumper sticker. Perhaps it reflects what many people believe, that religion and loving the Lord are not attached, and that you can “love the Lord” without anything called “religion.”

There isn’t any doubt in my mind that some forms of religion have nothing to do with loving the Lord; in fact, nothing to do with the Lord! The modern, tolerant use of the word “religion” takes in everything from Satanism to institutionalized forms of religion which have no basis in the Lord’s Word at all. In our society there are hundreds of religious orders, cults, denominations and local churches considered to be religions, but with little resemblance to the teachings of the apostles (Acts 2:42). Many of these religions claim to represent

the Lord and love Him; Jesus said this would be the case (Mt 7:22). Loving the Lord – as defined in Scripture – does not require membership in any of these groups. In fact, if you love the Lord and keep His commandments, you will endeavor to avoid any fellowship or association that would involve you in anything He hasn’t approved (see II Jn 9; Eph 5:11; II Tim 2:15; I Tim 6:3ff). If you love the Lord, that love will cause you to want fellowship with others who love and fear Him, and keep His precepts (see Ps 119:63). But in all these remarks, I’ve been talking about the religious offerings and associations of men, which have no basis in the Word of God.

There is a scriptural use of the term “religion” and whatever that involves, it is essential in the activ-

ity of our love for the Lord.

Consider This Word “Religion”

I spent a little time recently looking into Webster’s unabridged dictionary, published in 1913. I found some interesting statements and observations about the English word “religion.”

I’m especially interested in Webster’s second definition, which I believe was widely accepted and maybe even the popular use of the word in 1913. Religion is “conformity in faith and life to the precepts ... in the Bible, respecting the conduct of life and duty toward God and man; the Christian faith and practice.”

It seems, as our society evolves or as time passes, we continue to broaden and widen the concept of religion. Today, virtually anything you decide to believe and practice can be called “religion.” You can make up your own; you can join

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with others and as a group, develop or use your imagination and call the product of your own collective imagination – *religion*. Earlier in our history and earlier in the English language, religion was understood to be “conformity in faith and life to the precepts” of the Bible. Even though in 1913 the religious world was divided and involved in considerable debate over the application of Bible authority, it was widely accepted that the Bible was the authority on the subject of religion.

“Religion” in the New Testament

Consider four passages where this word is used in our English translations (the New King James). In Acts 26:5 - the reference here

concerns the religion of Judaism, the sect of the Pharisees in particular. Paul said, before his conversion to Christ, he had lived “according to the strictest sect of our religion.”

Next, in Col 2:23 - Paul wrote about people who make up their own religion to suit their needs; he said, “These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion...”

In James 1:26 - James talks about the person who thinks he is religious, but he does not bridle or control his tongue; the point is: “this one’s religion is useless.”

And in the next verse, Jms 1:27 - This statement, “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” Observe, there is such a thing as “pure and undefiled religion before God.”

So when we look at the English word, and add the Biblical references, we discover that this word has to do with one’s concepts, beliefs and behavior – directed toward deity. But, just because something may be called “religion,” it does not follow it is right ... remember, James tells us there is religion that is vain or “useless.”

Modern Concepts of Religion:

Subjective, personal recipe religion. Some people want to have something called “religion,” but they want to make it up themselves. Instead of letting God’s Word determine what they believe and do, they want to take a subjective, personal approach, and just develop their own recipe. This is a common, modern approach to religion: you just make up your own. Many folks have made up their own personal religious system and they

claim that reflects their love for the Lord.

Denominational, institutional. With this approach, you just find some denominational organization or institution, and you become a part of that group. In the minds of many, many people today, this solves the problem; this is the answer to religious or spiritual needs (and all kinds of other needs!). Perhaps you rely on your family heritage or the yellow pages but you find a denomination, and seek to have your spiritual needs met by that institution. In the preaching and rhetoric of these institutions (evangelical in particular), there will be constant reference to praising and loving the Lord.

Subordination to a leader. You find some person – some man or highly acclaimed leader – and you subordinate your religious needs to him. You let this leader influence you and tell you what to believe ... *you let him interpret the Bible for you* and you may even turn your resources over to him.

Social. The social approach to religion is: you find a group of people you are comfortable with – people you like. You do not bother with values, principles or messy thing like doctrine or creeds. You just find a bunch of folks you like to be with and that group becomes the center and focus of your religious life.

These are four common attitudes and approaches to the practice and profession of religion in our society. There is, I believe, a far better approach; there is, in fact, what I believe is **the right approach!** And it isn’t complicated at all ... **Here it is:**

Let God tell you what to do! If religion is about your life of service to God, the Creator, why not let Him have a say in this; why not just decide you will listen to Him

(Religious, continued on pg 3...)

THIS WEEK'S DAILY BIBLE READINGS

NEW TESTAMENT READING

II CORINTHIANS 9 - 13;
II THESSALONIANS 1 - 3

October 5 - 7

OLD TESTAMENT READING

I SAMUEL 9 - 15

October 8 - 11

I TIMOTHY 4:13

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 (Dee Bowman)
January 11 - 14, 2015

Gospel Meeting (Carl McMurray)
April 12 - 15, 2015

V.B.S.
June 21 - 25, 2015

Annual Singing
September 12, 2015

Gospel Meeting (Jim Deason)
September 13 - 16, 2015

Sick and Shut-Ins

Sections have been removed to preserve members' privacy

Sermons:

Next Sunday:

Identifying the Church
that Jesus Built

Tonight:

Lessons From an Anointing

“... I was sick, and you visited me...”
Matthew 25:36

Preaching Abroad...

(Religious, continued from pg 2...)

and do whatever He says (trust & obey)? And, I do not mean go home and wait for Him to speak to you directly. You see, He has already spoken to all of us!

There is the majestic declaration of Hebrews 1:1 – that **God Hath Spoken!** Yes, God has spoken. He has already spoken to all of us through His Word. Why not just decide to read, to study and believe and do what God has said in His word?

When you stop long enough to consider; when you slow down from the busy pace of the world and just think that God made you in His own image, He sustains your very life, and He sent His son to die for you – isn't it right, and doesn't it make sense, **to read, study, believe and do just what God has said?** Let your life for the Lord express itself in your full commitment to His pure and undefiled religion, which simply means: **Doing what He says in his word.**

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome,” (1 Jn 5:3).

(copied from *The Preceptor*)
(edited for space)



Ladies Class...

Ladies, don't forget the **Fall Ladies Bible Classes**. The morning class will run from 9/30/14 until 11/18/14 meeting every week at the Fry Road Building at 10:00 a.m. The evening class will run from 9/30/14 until 11/11/14 meeting every other Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m. at Cinco Ranch Library. On 11/18/14 there will be a Special Topics class for one evening.

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

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