

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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“Conviction or Convenience”

By Carrol R. Sutton

True conviction involves a firm or settled belief based upon evidence contained in the Word of God. Our actions should be determined by and based on our convictions. When we act in religious matters because of convenience instead of conviction, we are not pleasing to God.

EXAMPLES OF CONVENIENCE:

No doubt Cain's offering of the fruit of the ground was an offering of convenience rather than one of conviction. It was not by faith. It did not please God (Gen. 4:1-7). The strange fire offered before the Lord by Nadab and Abihu may have been conveniently offered, but it displeased the Lord. They did not act out of true conviction. "And there went out fire from the Lord, and they died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:2). Jereboam's system of worship was instituted as a matter of convenience for the children of Israel, but they were guilty of idolatry. They did not worship the true God out of conviction, but rather they worshipped false gods out of convenience. "And this thing became a sin..." (1 Kgs. 12:30).

EXAMPLES OF CONVICTION:

The actions of Noah in building the ark were not prompted by convenience but rather by conviction. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and

became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7). "Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22). Abraham "was called the Friend of God" because he obeyed God in spite of the fact that it was not always convenient to do so. He left his country and kinsmen and went into a country where God sent him. He "offered Isaac" upon the altar because of his firm and settled belief in the God of heaven. Because of his conviction, Daniel "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God" in spite of the fact that a decree had been established and signed that if anyone asked a petition of any god or man for thirty days, except of the King, that he would be cast into a den of lions (Dan. 6). The life of the apostles and many other early Christians attest to the conviction they had. Their faith was demonstrated by their work and their labor of love. They rejoiced because they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A GROWING TENDENCY:

It seems that there is a growing tendency to be "religious" only IF it is convenient. Some people may obey a "form" in order to please a companion rather than to please God. Others may "obey" for business reasons or because it is popular. Some will attend periods of Bible study and worship only if the building is nice and conveniently located. Giving may be done by some out of convenience rather than out of conviction. Some will pray, sing, study, teach, visit and assist the needy ONLY IF it is convenient for them. Some preachers will take a "stand" and "contend for the faith" on certain issues ONLY IF it is convenient to do so. Otherwise, they continue to "study the question" and remain undecided. It may be that the "pulse" of the brotherhood and "influential preachers" may make it convenient for them to remain "undecided." Sometimes it is "convenient" for a false teacher to misrepresent those with whom he disagrees. This is a device of Satan of which we should not be ignorant. "Convenience" prompts many people to act and react as they do.

A critical self-examination should be made by all of us. What is our true motive for acting as we do? It is to please self, to please men, or to please God? Is it to glorify self or glorify God?

Every act that we do in service, work, or worship should be characterized by true conviction. All of us need conviction. CONVICTION WILL CRY OUT! True conviction points toward heaven.

Be an organ donor – give your heart to God!

Who Should Attend Bible Classes?

By Mark White

Should the elders of the church?

Would you want men to serve as spiritual overseers who do not believe in the Sunday morning and Wednesday night Bible studies they have arranged? Could our Bible classes really be successful without the support, encouragement, and attendance of the elders?

Should the deacons?

Can men selected to serve the church in special areas of work perform their services faithfully and effectively if they do not support the teaching program of the church? If they do not attend both Sunday morning and Wednesday evening classes, how can they be deacons?

Should the preacher?

Would you really want a preacher who did not come to the Bible study arranged for the congregation? Is he under more responsibility to attend than the rest of the members? What about his wife and children? Is the preacher more responsible for attending on Wednesday night than members who attend infrequently, or not at all?

Should the teachers?

How could someone calling himself a Bible class teacher not be here? How could he teach others about faithfulness, obedience, and spiritual priorities when he doesn't participate in a class himself? Any teacher who thinks it

unnecessary to come unless they are teaching does not deserve a class. Actions speak louder than words!

Should every able member of the church?

Isn't something amiss when we habitually miss Bible study to involve ourselves in civic matters, business deals, political parties, or other personal matters? Is it really possible for a Christian to be putting the kingdom first if God's people and their study of His word are not priorities with him?