

THE LEXIA EDIFIER

ROMANS 14:19 ...Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

JANUARY 20, 2013

'A WORD FITLY SPOKEN'

Jim Stauffer

Prov. 25:11 *A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in network of silver.*
When the writer of Proverbs offers this thought he speaks of the propriety that must be involved in communication for it to achieve its desired result.

He follows verse 11 with, *As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, So is a wise reprovor upon an obedient ear.*

It is, of course, much easier to find an obedient ear when our words are fitly spoken.

There is no doubt some possess a great talent for speaking plainly yet without offense. Others struggle when it is time to tell someone they are wrong.

When we see someone who is very adept at correcting error we should recognize it took practice to develop. They did not accomplish that overnight. The preacher who presents a well organized and informative lesson had to work and develop that skill. We see skilled people in all fields each day and realize they devoted themselves to reach an accomplished level.

Our difficulty lies with speaking appropriately without sacrificing the truth. How do we harmonize **Proverbs 25:11** with **2 Tim. 4:2** *preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.* The answer is to be found in a genuine love for the truth. (**John 17:17**)

We hear two men debate issues of biblical interpretation and sometimes observe the discussion degenerating into a name calling contest. The problem here is their desire to "win" the debate is stronger than their love for the truth and the souls of each other.

To the other extreme we sometimes fail to correct someone because our feelings for them are strong and we fear offending them. Do we love them more than the truth of God's word? Do we truly love someone if we shield them from the truth? Valid questions that should both be answered in the negative.

Growing up I remember a kind man in the church that to me epitomized the attitude of a Christian. What I later learned was that

confronting false teaching. He was one who stood by and allowed the local congregation to devolve into such error it no longer resembled the church of our Lord. He was incapable of speaking 'a word fitly spoken.'

Harsh words spoken in anger are not 'like apples of gold in a network of silver.' But neither are words that skirt the truth and thus deny the confrontation demanded when truth meets error. If we are of the truth our lives are about shining the light of truth on the darkness of error. **(John 3:21)** In our lives as children of God, lights of the world, salt of the earth, it will be necessary for us to speak 'a word fitly spoken.' To our neighbors who need to come to Christ and to our brethren who need to stay with Christ, the truth properly applied will be 'like apples of gold in a network of silver.'

The Search for Truth

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

Jesus boldly claims that He alone is the way to God. He alone offers the truth of spiritual reality. He alone can give the life that really counts. His divine certainty starkly contrasts with the tentative religious opinions of modern man.

A Pew Religious Survey of 35,000 Americans revealed: 70% of believers think that many religions can lead to eternal life. Of these, 68% believe there is more than one true way to interpret their own religion. About 25% of Catholics, mainline Protestants and Orthodox believers expressed some doubts about God's existence, while 60% of Jews did. While 92% of Americans believe in God, only 63% of these believe their respective religious traditions' Scriptures are God's Word. Strangely, 20% of atheists believe there is a God/universal spirit!

A Boston Univ. sociologist, Peter Berger, observed, "What do people really mean...that many religions lead to eternal life? It might mean they don't believe their particular truth at all." A senior fellow at Woodstock Theological Center (Georgetown Univ.) said the survey

showed, "Some people are like butterflies that go from flower to flower, going from religion to religion – and frankly they don't get that deep into any of them."

Also, the popular book, *Radical Restoration*, proposes radical changes in "how we do church" among churches of Christ. Constructive criticism, validated only on the grounds of a solid, Scriptural foundation, is good. Yet, one glaring weakness is it's filled with tentative words and presumptive applications. Assertions are repeatedly nuanced: "perhaps...it seems to me...I assume...It well may be...presumably...probably...might have been...I wonder" etc. What "might" be so, "might not" be so too!

No, we need solid truth and firm conviction, not tenuous assertions, of the pattern restoring the New Testament church!

The Exclusive Truth of Christ

We can put our full weight down on the words of God's Son. In contrast men's opinions, Jesus spoke divine truth with sure authority **(Matt 5:20-23, 7:28-29)**. He never spoke hesitatingly: "I am inclined to think...maybe... Let me suggest" etc. No, He spoke with clear conviction of truth. He is from above, sent from God, and spoke in absolutes **(Jn. 3:31, 8:23)**. He dogmatically claimed to speak directly from what He had seen and heard from the Father, refusing to presume to go beyond the silence of God **(Jn 5:20, 8:26,28; 12:49-50, 17:8)**.

Jesus made bold claims: "If you abide in my word, you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" **(Jn. 8:32)**. He alone confidently offers spiritual freedom from sin, ignorance, and uncertainty. Jesus even boldly pointed out the errors of current scholarship in their erroneous view of Scripture **(Matt 5:20-43, 15:1-9, 23:1-36)**.

Why? So fallible, arrogant men will renounce self-serving agendas and humbly take their stand only on the rock of His everlasting gospel **(Matt 11:28, Jn 5:40)**.

So, how could Jesus sustain these truth claims? He asserted the divine prerogative of forgiving men's sins **(Mk 2:7-10, Lk 7:48)**. His exclusive way is confirmed by performing amazing public miracles **(Jn 3:2, 11:43,**

10:18). He also lived a sinless life as man's perfect Savior. This was all confirmed by multiple eye-witnesses willing to die for their faith (**1 Cor 15:6, Acts 4:20**). "Truly, no man speaks the way this Man speaks" (**Jn 7:46**).

What Shall We Do with the Truth of Jesus?

Why was Jesus so dogmatic in teaching truth? Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord of heaven and earth that alone has the truth of God! He is not merely a nice religious teacher among many. The Bible testifies that He is uniquely God in human flesh (**Jn 1:1,14**). He alone has the wonderful words of eternal life (**Jn 6:68**), which will judge us all in the end (**Jn 12:48**). He also challenges us that His way is narrow that leads to life and only few take the trouble to find it (**Matt 7:13-14**).

We can read and understand His truth (**Eph 3:4**). We can surely believe truth and boldly speak it to a lost, confused world (**Acts 2:36, 4:31**). Praise God that anyone can freely find the truth in Christ and be saved by trusting, loving obedience to His grace (**Jn 7:17; 3:36; 14:15**)!

By W. Frank Walton

THE TOP TEN THINGS YOUR CHILDREN SHOULD SEE IN THEIR PARENTS!

1. Parents Who Love And Respect Authority.

A. This means they obey those in authority and respect what rules accomplish.

2. Parents Who love To Study The Bible.

A. Children should see their parents studying God's Word in places other than church. Parents should be studying with their children.

3. Parents Who Love To Sing And Pray.

A. Again this should be accomplished in church as well as at home. Children should see Dad praying on his knees.

4. Parents Who Don't Murmur.

A. Some parents complain about church regularly on the way home from the assembly. Little ears in the backseat hear this.

5. Parents Who Don't Gossip Or Backbite.

A. Children should never see Dad shake a brother's hand at church then speak bad about him to Mom on the way home.

6. Parents Who Seek Mercy For Others.

A. Children should never see vindictive parents.

7. Parents Who Regularly Attend Church.

A. This is huge. In my lifetime I have rarely seen children grow up to be faithful when their parents did not emphasize attending services as a priority.

8. Parents Who Love Their Children.

A. You can say it. You can feel it. But your actions better show it.

9. Parents Who Love Each Other.

A. Children need to see your love for your mate.

10. Parents Who Love God And Keep His Commandments.

by Richard Dodson

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, **20** being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; **21** in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1 Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psalms 1: 1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scoffers; **2** But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. **3** And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. **4** The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. **5** Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. **6** For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish.

News and Notes: Let us remember the instruction of our Lord by visiting in whatever way we can, **Jan Patrick, Mary Czirr, Terry Czirr and Candiss Cason.** Also remember **Irene Hurd** in St. Luke's.

Matt. 25:40 *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.*

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We recommend to you the following websites:

***facebook.comlenexachurchofchrist/
thelenexaedifier.com
lenexachurchofchrist.org***

Our Meeting times are:

Sunday Bible Classes: 9:30 AM
Worship Services 10:20 AM&5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Classes 7:00 PM

The Church at Lenexa is a congregation of brethren who have been "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (**Romans 3:24**)

As a result of this justification we have been "delivered out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (**Colossians 1:13,14**)

We therefore respect the inspired word of God that will completely furnish us unto every good work by speaking only as the oracles of God. (**2 Timothy 3:16,17; 1 Peter 4:11**)

What must one do to be saved?

Hear the gospel -

Romans 10:17

Believe in Christ -

Heb. 11:6

Repent of sin - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord -

Romans 10:9,10

Be baptized for the remission of sins - Acts 2:38