



LENEXA EDIFIER

FEBRUARY

12

2017

LEARNING TO DO IT THE RIGHT WAY!

Jim Stauffer

How did you learn to do it the right way? Do what, you say? Anything. Think about it. Some of the most basic things in life are learned from childhood up and are taught by mentors. Usually your parents or older siblings, school teachers or other adults we trust have given counsel as we have grown and matured. We have watched them and learned from both their words and deeds.

For instance while I was still very young my father taught me how to use a hand saw and cut a straight line. It is important to know whether to leave the marked line by cutting beside it or eliminate it by cutting it out. Many failures followed and alas, I was not carpenter material.

The process of learning to do it the right way can be impeded by mentors who as mere humans teach us the wrong way. We, then subsequently learn of and correct this error later. We were wrong. We admitted it and made the necessary changes.

Now, consider if your mentor never made mistakes. What if every message or instruction were perfect? What if the person you were learning from was never wrong? You would be listening to God, the Christ Who came down from heaven carrying the message of God the Father (**John 14:6; 17:17**).

It is just as important we realize the stakes in the matter. This mentor is leading the soul of man, that part of us that will live forever in either the bliss of heaven or the torture of hell. No wonder God sent His only begotten Son to be the Master Teacher for His creation and lead them back to God. This carries far greater implications than learning a craft with which to provide

sustenance of life here on earth. This instruction can lead to eternal joy.

It is difficult for us to fully comprehend eternity. Therefore, our mentor must be someone who has experienced eternity to instruct us on its importance (**Joh. 1:1,2; Ex. 3:6; Mt. 22:32; Joh. 8:58**). We see all around us as having a limited lifetime or period of usefulness. We must listen to Him to realize eternity means there is no end.

Some very important lessons for us are seen in biblical examples of those who recognized the need to change course because they were wrong. They learned to do it the right way. Those who crucified Jesus became fully aware of who He was and what they had done. Their admission of wrong doing came when they said, *Brethren, what shall we do?* (**Ac. 2:37**) They then followed the instruction of the apostles to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (**Ac. 2:38-41**). The apostle Paul was of the same mindset of those who crucified Christ. He consented to the stoning of the evangelist Stephen and dragged men and women from their homes and put them in prison (**Ac. 8:3**). But after the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus, he changed his mind and obeyed the instruction of Ananias to, *Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.* (**Ac. 22:16**)

The gospel of Jesus Christ is *the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* (**Rom. 1:16**) But the gospel demands of each and everyone of us to learn to do it the right way. It demands change; repentance. This is true of its very nature from the beginning (**Lk. 24:46,47**).

Idiotic Things People Say, IV

No one is immune from saying idiotic things from time to time, myself included. The reason for this series is to expose those things which are Biblically untrue that many build their lives around, or that they use to shut down the conversation when it comes to their relationship to the Almighty. A momentary "Brain-Blip" is not what this series is about.

Our next idiotic statement for consideration is: "Sitting in a church pew doesn't mean anything. I don't have to go to church to be a good Christian." Let's admit it. Sitting in the church building doesn't make you a Christian any more than sitting in a chicken house makes you a chicken. The Gospel has to enter the heart and change it. Everybody knows that who has any heart for truth and honesty. Everybody hates hypocrisy. But that is NOT what this person is saying. No. This person is saying that they do not have to DO what the Word of God clearly commanded them to DO, and yet still expect to go to heaven. They are using words which express a grain of truth to hide their actual contention. (For you logicians that is called: obfuscation. To the rest of us: he muddied the water.)

Jesus told the Apostles to "**Mt 28:19f**, *"Go ... make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."* Jesus meant that we had to follow the commands given. That's why you give a command in the first place, isn't it? Then the Hebrew writer said in **Hebrews 10:24**, *"let's consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together"*.

To be continued.... **Cleveland Reddinger**

"For Such A Time As This"

There is a story in Esther of how she learned of the plot of an evil man named Haman to destroy all the Jews of the land of the Persians. By God's providence, she had become the queen, and by a petition to the King, she was allowed to make a decree that the Jews could assemble and defend themselves against all enemies. During this process, Esther had a problem. There was a rule that nobody could approach the King unless they had been summoned to appear before him. The body guards were under penalty of death if they let anyone near, no matter who it was. When Esther was counseled to bring her request to the King, she was fearful. Her cousin, Mordecai, encouraged her to take a brave step towards the King. In **Esther 4:13-14**, Mordecai told Esther that she would not be exempt from being put to death if this happened.

We read in **4:14**: *"For if you remain silent at this*

time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?" What Mordecai was saying was that God will protect His people, with whoever would stand up to defend them. Mordecai just pointed out that somehow God placed her in a position that she could make a difference, and help her people. It is a great story from God's word.

We do not always know how the providence of God works. The scriptures do not address what we believe to be common. God finds ways to accomplish His will, and He uses people to do it. We are mindful in the days of the Jews when God decided to punish His people, that He would use even godless nations to accomplish His purpose. Remember that God sent Moses to Egypt carrying a rod, and Moses led nearly two million Israelites towards the promised land. God used Saul, whom He named Paul to take the gospel message of Christ unto the Gentiles. Just knowing how much Jews despised Gentiles would reveal how much Paul had to overcome to present the love of God towards all mankind.

We must also bring out the fact that the providence of God exists today. We may not be able to explain it by scripture, but we also believe in it. The words given to Esther are something we need to consider about ourselves. If by the providence of God, we come across the path of a seeker, or someone wanting to learn about Christ and His church, we need to understand that God put us there to help this individual. If we ignore the opportunity, we can be sure that God will use someone else. But as the sage admonition from her cousin would go: We do not know if we were placed here in this time and place for such an occasion to influence and/or assist someone in need of the truth.

Our job is to make the effort to share God's word. God is the one who will bring forth the results. I do not know how many times I hear that someone read one of my articles and was uplifted in spirit, or found the answer they were looking for. Most of the time I am not even aware that I have helped someone by my writing. So if by my effort of trying to serve God, that He uses me to make contact with someone who needs salvation, it is not my place to withhold the truth from anyone. God's word will accomplish what God wants. It is our sharing of that word that will help people receive salvation.

By Carey Scott, simplebiblestudies.com

CONNECT THE DOTS

Have you ever heard of the need to "connect the dots"? What does it mean? We might immediately think of the game often found on children's menu in restaurants. That is, an incomplete picture is on the paper but after connecting the dots a horse and rider are clearly seen.

Are you able to connect the dots? *“And all the multitudes were amazed and said, could this be the Son of David?”* (Matt 12:23). The signs Jesus did among the people gave testimony of his messiahship, yet many people refused to acknowledge that truth; they failed to “connect the dots.”

For example, the power of Jesus over the demonic world proved him to be the Messiah (Christ). Jesus said, *“But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.”* (Matt 12:28). In spite of the overwhelming evidence, the people continued to be amazed. They saw and heard Jesus and then wondered if he could be the Son of David (Messiah).

There are some things about which no one should be surprised. Jesus came with the necessary signs and other credentials proving his divinity, therefore there was no reason for these people to wonder and be confused about Jesus. That is, it was easy for them to “connect the dots” and get the clear picture if they were interested in honestly evaluating the evidence.

A few years ago I preached the funeral for a woman who died at the age of 61 from lung cancer. The February before I conducted her funeral, I preached her husband’s funeral; he also died from lung cancer.

Her daughter told me her mother was sick at the time of her father’s death, but she did not know how serious it was. Yes, both these people had been heavy smokers. I remember witnessing this woman and others continuing to smoke cigarettes at the funeral of her husband. Was there any reason for her to be surprised that she also developed lung cancer? I don’t think so! Furthermore, I will not be surprised to learn that others within this family also develop cancer as a result of their life choices.

Connect the dots.

As a young preacher I spoke out about smoking. I urged those who smoked to consider the harm they were doing to their bodies. Bodies that the Bible says are temples of the Holy Spirit. *“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are,”* (1 Cor. 3:16-17). One brother, who had been a very close friend became infuriated and set out to destroy me. He wanted me “fired” and when it didn’t happen he refused to speak to me for the time I remained there.

A few years later, when I lived in another city, he called and said he wanted to come see me. His son-in-law brought him to see me—I was shocked! His body, ravaged by lung cancer was hardly recognizable. We sat on the porch while he apologized for his bitterness. He said he would have given anything if he would have listened (might I say, connected the dots) to the admonition against smoking. We embraced, cried together and prayed together. He died ten days later!

I urge all parents to be wise enough to connect the

dots! Parents who encourage their children to forsake the worship of the church for sports, school or work should not be surprised when those young people turn away from the Lord. Commitment in a child is often in proportion to the faith and commitment of parents. Parents must demonstrate to their young people daily that duty to God takes precedence over anything and everything.

An “elder” said to the preacher “I guess you are mad at me.” The preacher said: “Why?” The man then told the preacher, “Well, as you know my son and I were not here Wednesday night. He had a ball game, and if he did not play, he would have let down the team.” Frankly, the boy and his dad did let down the team – the church. This man should not act amazed when his son chooses work over worship, the world over the Lord and immorality over modesty. Connect the dots.

Paul said, *“Do all things without complaining and disputing.”* (Phil 2:14). Despite this clear injunction from God there are many church “members” who murmur about everything. They gossip and whine about the times and length of worship, the song leader, the sermon, the crying kids and just about anything one could imagine. Many times all that is discussed in the car on the way home from worship is nothing but complaints. Parents, what is this doing in the hearts of your children? Will they grow up believing that every preacher is a heartless cad? That every elder is a hypocrite? That every Bible class teacher is out to get them? Parents, connect the dots! What picture is developing here? How will those children be in the future?

Often this complaining is even done to unbelievers. Several years ago an older couple asked me to talk to their son in an effort to lead him to the Lord. I didn’t know the couple well at first. However, I tried numerous times to help their son to obey the gospel, but all efforts proved futile. After I got to know the family better I clearly understood why their son had no interest in the church. His parents murmured and complained about the church, the preacher (me), the Bible class teachers (the boy refused to attend class with the parents’ approval) and the general membership. Around the dinner table this boy heard his parents belch out complaint after complaint. Why would this boy ever wish to be part of a community of people who were held in such contempt by his parents? Connect the dots.

“Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” (1 Tim 4:12). It is disturbing but true that sometimes believers become hindrances instead of helps. Poor examples we set will keep others from committing to Christ. On the other hand, good examples can and do lead others to the Lord. Connect the dots.

J R Bronger, Danville Enlightener

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, a 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:

Psa. 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 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 the 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.

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WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: ECCLESIASTES - BYRON TAYLOR

SUNDAY SERMON: SHOULD WE MODERATE THE TRUTH?



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10