

It Is Written

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Standing For Nothing Has Consequences

By Chuck Bartlett

I remember hearing a lyric to a song on the radio that went, "If you stand for nothing, you will fall for everything." This line immediately made me think of what the apostle Paul told the brethren at Ephesus, "that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14).

Who likes to be deceived, especially when it comes to Biblical teaching? The sad reality is, many people are deceived, and we need to do everything we can to prevent that from happening. But the question we have is, how can we prevent it from happening? The Lord has provided many helps, but we will just focus on the ones we find in the verse we just quoted by Paul.

Grow Up

The first thing the apostle told the saints was, "be not children". God's people need to grow up, meaning they need to increase their faith (2 Peter 3:18). Even though Christians are God's children, in this text, it is talking about maturity. Those who never get grounded will remain a babe and as such, are vulnerable, not being able to discern between good and evil (Hebrews 5:13-14). The goal of every convert ought to be to desire the milk as a babe, but get off the milk and onto the meat as soon as possible (Hebrews 5:12).

Don't Believe Everything You Hear

The Ephesian church was told not to be carried away with every wind of doctrine. It's one thing to be trusting, it's another matter when it is done to a fault. God's people are commanded to test the spirits to see whether they are of God (1 John 4:1). There shouldn't be a tossing about, going back and forth, when there is only the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). There are many teachings that sound Biblical, but they don't have a scripture to stand on. When people say things like, "Baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace" or "Cleanliness is next to godliness" and "Accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and you will be saved", they are words that sound scriptural, but they are not.

Remember That Religious Teachers Are Just Men

Again, in Ephesians 4:14, Paul stated that saints were not to be tossed about by the trickery and cunning craftiness of men. Such people often get away with what they do because people hold them up above others. To give anyone a blind allegiance is a recipe for disaster. Just because someone says they are a teacher of God's word; he must be held to the standard - the word of God (1 Peter 4:11). The mere fact that Paul told these brethren not to fall for their teachings, is proof that such men can be opposed - regardless of their position. Even the apostle Peter couldn't rest on the fact he was an apostle, when Paul rebuked him for his sinful behavior (Galatians 2:11). Men might want to be elevated, but if we allow that to happen, the fault is ours.

Know That You Can Have Victory

The mere fact that these brethren were given instructions as to what they should not allow, is

evidence that it can be prevented. Why tell someone not to be tossed about, if it has to happen? Falling away doesn't have to happen. As Jesus pointed out, we can know the truth and the truth will set us free (John 8:32). Truth be known, if someone is teaching error, you can correct them (Acts 18:26-28), and if they don't change, you can walk away from them. Remember, we can resist the devil (James 4:7). Let us all heed these words in Ephesians 4:14, and not be children and carried about with every wind of doctrine.

The Indwelling Of The Spirit

By Bill Hall

Few people would question the fact that the Holy Spirit in some way dwells within the Christian. Paul wrote to the saints in Corinth: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you..." (I Cor. 6:19). He further wrote, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9). There is considerable disagreement, however, as to how the Spirit dwells within a Christian. It is not our aim in this short article to deal with that issue, but we do want to suggest three facts that must be remembered as one studies the question.

(1) The age of miracles is past. The only people in the gospel age who ever performed miracles were those who either received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-46) or received spiritual gifts through the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:5-23; 19:1-7). No one receives either of these today. The purpose of the miracles was to reveal and confirm truth (I Cor. 2:7-13; Mark 16:19,20). Since all truth has been revealed (John 16:13) there is no further need for miracles. One's conclusion, therefore, concerning the indwelling of the Spirit must be compatible with this fact.

(2) The Christian is led by the Spirit through the scriptures, the word of God (Psa. 119:105; II Tim. 3:16,17; Eph. 3:3,4). He does not have some inner voice, separate from the scriptures, that somehow guides him into infallible conclusions in relation to truth and right. Nor is there anything in the scriptures that suggests that God's providence somehow works through the indwelling of the Spirit. Consequently, one makes a serious mistake if he interprets his feelings or subjective thinking as some kind of message provided by the indwelling Spirit.

(3) Statements concerning the indwelling of the Spirit were not placed in the scriptures as problems to be wrestled with. They were placed there for one's assurance and consolation. A Christian sustains a very close fellowship with deity — so close that it can be said that he dwells in deity and deity dwells in him. In persecution, trials, temptations, and death his recognition of this close relationship sustains him and helps him to become triumphant in Christ. The apostles never felt the need to explain how this indwelling takes place. Pentecostalism and other misconceptions concerning the Holy Spirit force the Christian of this generation to be concerned with this problem. If, however, statements concerning the indwelling of the Spirit become primarily to him a problem to be wrestled with; if his obsession with the "how" of the Spirit's indwelling blinds him to the "fact" of that indwelling, he makes a serious mistake and may fail to find the joy and consolation that should be gained through the Lord's promise.

Differences will continue to exist, but a constant remembrance of these three facts should protect any one of us from dangerous conclusions in relation to this question