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The Two Debtors

When Jesus entered into Simon the Pharisee's home to share a meal, a woman came into the house and began to weep at Jesus' feet. She began washing His feet with her tears; she wiped the tears with her hair; she kissed His feet and then poured a fragrant oil on them. She was a sinner, thus her many tears and humble heart. Simon, the host, thought within himself that if Jesus were in truth a prophet, He would know this woman is a sinner. (Luke 7:36-39)

Jesus answered His thoughts (Jesus could do that) by telling a parable. The parable is simple to understand. Two men owed their creditor money. One man owed a much greater debt than the other. Neither man however could pay their debt so the creditor forgave them of all they owed. Jesus asks Simon, "which of them will love him more?" (verse 42) The answer is obvious in that the one forgiven of the greater debt would love the creditor more.

The lesson of the parable is found in verse 47 "her sins, which are many are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." Verse 48 says "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

When one has faith in the Son of God, they act upon that faith. Because she came to Jesus and had great remorse for her sins, she was forgiven. Her love was great because her sins were great.

Who among us can say their sins are not great? We must love much because we have been forgiven of much.

Stacy

All Talk, No Action

-by Frank Himmel

Why is it that we talk about things for so long before doing them, at times to the exclusion of doing them?

To the extent that discussion is part of planning, it is good to talk before doing. Several proverbs commend thinking ahead. "Where there is no guidance the people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is victory" (11:14). "...the prudent man considers his steps" (14:15). "The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage, but everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty" (21:5). Much time and effort are wasted by failure to adequately plan. However, not all talk is planning.

Sometimes we talk but don't do because the thing we are talking about is really beyond reach. It is but a dream.

Fear may be the problem. One might talk about a thing for a while as a means of rousing his courage. Or, his conversation may amount to nothing more than an acknowledgment of what should be done - all the while he knows he is too fearful of failure or opposition to ever try.

Extended conversation may reflect indecision. Have you ever been in a group where a decision was reached, yet long after that, people were still discussing its merits rather than working toward its implementation? The culprit is indecision; we really aren't committed to the task. Indecision means that nothing is done. It can be as debilitating as poor decisions.

Talk may be idle boasting. It may stand alone because of laziness or other priorities. Yet somehow, talking about things, especially things we know we ought to do, makes us feel better about them. And therein lies the danger. We can confuse talking about a subject with genuine interest or even progress in that area.

The Remedy

Talk is no substitute for action. Elders can plan the best possible program of work or study, but if we never get around to doing it, no good will be done. Saying we need to visit the sick does nothing to comfort them. Does merely talking about brethren overtaken in a trespass restore them? Likewise, discussing the importance of spreading the gospel does not save souls.

Parents, simply threatening unruly children - "If you do that one more time..." - accomplishes nothing. No, punishment for bad behavior is what establishes the boundary.

Some folks talk about making their lives right with God. And talk. And talk. "And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22:16).

Is There a Basis for Your Joy?

by Stan Cox

Do you feel good about yourself? Your relationship with God? Do you feel good about those with whom you have spiritual fellowship? Do you have joy without measure? A peace which passes understanding? Does a smile invariably crease your face when you contemplate your eternal welfare? It does? Good!...Now for the most important question. Upon what do you base all of these positive emotions?

Hopefully, you have a ready answer to this last question. The proper answer would be, "From a study of God's word, I recognize that I have been obedient to His will, and am a partaker of the blessings that are reserved for His children." Now, you might not word it in exactly the same way, but the point is that your good feelings, your emotions, are based upon an intellectual recognition. You know you have been obedient to God. You know that God has promised blessings to those who are obedient. You know that God keeps His promises. Therefore you are happy. However, many experience that same happiness without that intellectual foundation.

Emotions are peculiar in that respect. You can be happy, sad, peaceful, worried, etc., without a proper foundation. A mother can be worried about the safety of her child, when in reality the child is perfectly safe. A city can sleep peacefully in the supposed safety of its beds, not knowing an earthquake is imminent. A follower of Mohammed can glory in his certainty of an eternal reward, not knowing that salvation is to be found only through Jesus (**cf. John 14:6**). An emotion is valid only if it is based on fact. Worry is appropriate only if there is the potential of harm; a feeling of peacefulness only if there is actual safety; spiritual joy only if a relationship with God actually exists.

Herein resides the problem with the emotionalism prevalent among religious people today. Too many believe themselves saved, not because they have the facts, but rather because they feel good about themselves. We see that it would be unreasonable for a mother to fret about the safety of her child when she sees and knows her child is safe. Why is it so many can not see how unreasonable it is to base their salvation upon a "feeling in my heart." There is a popular notion that the facts don't matter. That we should stop emphasizing the scripture, and just love one another. That we should emphasize the Man instead of the plan. That it does not matter what you believe, so long as you are sincere. This is simply not so.