



The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 9

January 2, 2022

No. 1

Why Should We Care About Conduct?

by David Dann

The apostle Peter writes of the relationship between the Christian, his conduct, and his Heavenly Father in the following manner: “but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’ And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear” (1 Pet. 1:15-17, NKJV).

Conduct has to do with one’s behavior and manner of life. Why should we care about our conduct? In answer to that question, please notice the instruction provided in the first letter of the apostle Peter concerning the importance of godly conduct. The right kind of behavior on the part of a child of God will:

1. Lead others to glorify God. Peter writes, “Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Pet. 2:11-12). Godly conduct is not intended to glorify the Christian, but is instead intended to bring glory to the Lord, who has instructed the Christian to behave in an honorable manner. As Jesus put it, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). Godly conduct can lead even those of the world to glorify God.

2. Silence those who are foolish. When it comes to submitting to the civil ordinances of man, Peter writes, “For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Pet. 2:15). The world is filled with foolish people who blaspheme the Lord and who seek to constantly point out what they perceive to be flaws and hypocrisy in the actions of the Lord’s people. But godly conduct on the part of the Christian can silence even the most foolish critics.

3. Win unfaithful mates to Christ. With regard to the marriage relationship, Peter writes, “Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear” (1 Pet. 3:1-2). While angry outbursts and malicious behavior will alienate husbands and wives from one another and from the Lord, godly conduct can serve as a powerful influence when it comes to winning one’s mate to the Lord.

4. Cause the enemies of righteousness to be ashamed. Peter writes, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed” (1 Pet. 3:15-16). Since we refuse to approve of those things which the word of God condemns, followers of Christ are often branded by the world as being hateful, mean-spirited, or intolerant. But godly conduct on the part of the child of God can serve to put to shame those who would disparage and malign His people.

Conclusion: Since the Lord is coming in judgment and will destroy the present world, Peter asks, “Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?” (2 Pet. 3:11-12). How is your conduct?

Gospel Forgiveness

Kenny Chumbley

Maybe you've heard it said that they who use God's vocabulary ought to use His dictionary. I believe this. But quoting or agreeing with this principle doesn't mean we practice it. If you gave it some thought, I'm guessing you could come up with several examples of how "we" use Biblical terms in unbiblical ways.

I think, for instance, that this is sometimes the case with forgiveness. Gospel forgiveness involves several things, not the least of which is reinstating a sinner in the relationship against which he sinned. Reinstatement/reconciliation isn't hard when another's sin only bruises us, and we can dismiss the injury with a wave of the hand. But when another's sin breaks us, shattering our trust and leaving our heart in pieces, one of the hardest things we'll ever attempt is to restore relationship with that person. But such is gospel forgiveness. And against this, the giants called bitterness, rage, anger, and malice; the fact that true forgiveness is undeserved and always costs the giver rather than the receiver*; etc., conspire. Chesterton's observation that "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting, it has been found difficult and left untried," well applies to forgiveness.

Yet gospel forgiveness is within our reach. And to this end I offer three thoughts, without commentary, letting the Spirit speak for Himself. (The italics, for emphasis, are mine.)

Forgiveness:

Has been done. "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2.13). "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Rom. 4.7).

Must be done. "'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses" Matt. 18.32–35).

Can be done. "[T]hat you may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead" (Eph. 1.18–20).

If we fail to bestow true forgiveness, it is due to our lack of faith, not to a lack of God's power. So instead of trying to construct untenable arguments to justify a forgiveness that isn't forgiveness at all, can we not encourage each other—and expect each other—to forgive one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us?

"Two images," wrote Jim McGuiggan, "regularly grip my attention. One is God coming down the steps of heaven with a baby in his arms to give to the world. The other is that baby, now a young man, running back up the steps of heaven with a sinner by the hand. Bringing him home. This encapsulates the gospel."

For Christ to bring the sinner home, He had to forgive.

Let us remember that for Christ to bring us home, we have to forgive.

*Sin always nails someone to a tree. Sometimes that someone is us. *No. 149 the prairie papers*