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Marriage

“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” Hebrews 13:4

Marriage is a wonderful blessing from God. It is God’s solution to man’s need for a companion, Genesis 2:20. It is an intimate relationship that is shared as each spouse leaves their own family and each are joined to one another. Genesis 2:24-25.

One’s marriage is not to be defiled, which means it is not to be soiled or stained with sin. Adultery defiles the marriage relationship thus the Lord prohibits it and pronounces strong condemnation against it. (Galatians 5:19-21)

To avoid sexual immorality God says through Paul, “Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.” 1 Corinthians 7:2 Sexual desires are a part of the male and female makeup but these desires are only lawful within a lawful marriage. Sexual relations are not to be used as a bargaining tool within the marriage so as to get what one wants. Consider 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 “Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

Yes marriage is truth honorable; it is precious’ it is dear; it is to be greatly cherished because it has such great value. We live in a time when marriage is not viewed as being honorable but it is because God has said it is!

STACY

The Tragedy of Prejudice

by Robert Wayne LaCoste

Prejudice is tragic! It is one of the most dangerous and insidious states of mind among men today. It is a sin against the God of Heaven, a destroyer of its victims and a hindrance to the cause of truth, wherever it is found. Every person has some prejudice to some extent, regarding some things. He may have a preference for some items such as food, clothing, colors, books, etc. These prejudices may not endanger his soul eternally speaking or hurt his influence with others, but it could deprive him of something he might otherwise enjoy in this life.

Prejudice does not always mean that an individual is wrong in his views, but it always does mean that he does not hold the views out of conviction from real evidence, otherwise it would not be prejudice.

It is perhaps good at this time to inquire just what prejudice means. Our English word is from two Latin terms: *prae* meaning before, and *judicium* meaning judgment. Webster accordingly defines it as "prejudgment, an opinion of mind without due examination." So we can see that prejudice is a conclusion before and without examination of the real facts!

The attitude and action of the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and elders among the Jews toward Jesus is a perfect example of prejudice and its consequences. How they could witness His miracles and not believe in Him is amazing indeed! The apostle Peter said on Pentecost, "Jesus approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know" (**Acts 2:22**). But these Jews were not convinced at

the time Jesus was here of these truths. His perfect life did not prove anything to them. Why? In fact Jesus asked the Jews, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (Jn. 8:46). The fact that they could not find anything wrong with Jesus did not erase their prejudice and the hardness of their hearts!

His teaching was far superior to any other teacher they had ever heard, "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (**Matt. 7:29**). Yet His superior ability to teach proved nothing to them either.

The Scriptures which they claimed to revere and esteem told of Christ. "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are that which testify of me" (**Jn. 5:39**). They were not convinced from their own law and that was a revelation from God! Why? Simple, they were prejudiced!

People in this present generation have seared their consciences, hardened their hearts, and turned away with many a deaf ear. Their attitude is like one expressed and heard many times, "Don't confuse me with the facts, my mind is made up." This is exactly the position of the prejudiced person. Such an attitude can only lead to eternal separation from God (**2 Thess. 1:7-9**)!

It is just as wrong for me to be prejudiced toward you, as it is for you to be prejudiced toward me. Many in the Lord's church are certainly prejudiced about many things. Prejudiced about denominations; prejudiced about names, practices, etc. The love of Christ cannot abide where and when a heart is governed by prejudice. Let each of us search our hearts and make sure we have the facts and all the facts before we draw any conclusions and make any decisions! Most of all, let's make sure our decisions are governed by Divine Writ, not by human, uninspired dogma and tradition. The former, not the latter, will "judge us in the last day" (Jn. 12:48; 2 Cor. 5:10).

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Conversation Control

by Steven Rouse

If someone were to stop you in mid-sentence at any given point in the day, what would you most likely be talking about? What fills your conversation? What fills your mind? Is it sports? Academics? Relationships? Daily events? God?

While there is nothing wrong in those first 4 things by themselves, when our conversation is filled with things of this world, our minds will follow. And not only our minds, but the minds of those whom we come into contact with throughout our days. Paul exhorted Timothy to "avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness" (**2 Timothy 2:16**).

How much of our conversation is merely worldly and empty? However, *we can do better!* Each of us has complete control of our speech and of our general topics of conversation. It may seem awkward at first to begin a spiritual conversation, and I think that Satan uses that to our demise every day. It can be a simple question that starts up a spiritual conversation: *How has God blessed you today? How are you doing spiritually? Do you need prayers for anything right now?*

We can help one another in this to become more spiritually minded. The skill of conversation steering must be one that we concern ourselves with, both with fellow Christians and with the lost souls we encounter. Start now—greet the next person you see with something spiritual. It's not as difficult as it seems, and with consistency, this habit will help us and those we encounter to draw closer to our awesome Father each and every day.