



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## Two Men React on Teaching on Morals

Bill Hall

Two men listen to lessons on practical Christian living, but their attitudes differ greatly.

The first man views all such teaching as arbitrary “church” rules. Warnings concerning dancing, mixed swimming, general immodesty, divorce for every cause, drinking, etc., are all looked upon as “Church of Christ” standards, traditions being sustained by the old-timers of the church who are out of touch with more up-to-date thinking on morals.

The second man is brought to understand that all such teaching is an outgrowth of genuine respect for the Bible; that warnings concerning the evils mentioned above are based on such Scriptures as Matthew 5:27,28; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Timothy 2:9; Matthew 19:9; and Romans 13:12-14; that they, therefore, are not arbitrary “church” rules, but are indeed a true picture of God’s will for His people.

The first man hates this teaching. Of course he does! Doesn’t he have just as much moral perception as another? Why should he allow some other man to decide what’s right or what’s wrong for him? He’ll do what he pleases. Nobody will bind his thinking on him.

The second man, recognizing that the standards under consideration are God’s and not man’s, gladly complies. Jesus Christ is his Lord and King. He will live whatever life His Lord wants him to live. He will make every sacrifice his Lord wants him to make. His conformity grows out of a desire to please God, not man.

The first man may take the form of a teenager rebelling against parental authority; or the form of a man “raised in the church,” whose church loyalty is beginning to wane; or the form of a new convert who is having difficulty defining modesty, decency, and lasciviousness in practical terms. The fault may lie within the person himself. He may be wanting to break away from all restrictions, thus refusing to view objectively Bible principles behind the teaching he is rejecting. Or the fault in some cases may lie in those who teach. They may be guilty of “establishing” their points along these lines through pulpit beating and foot stamping, rather than through sound reasoning from the Scriptures; of unconsciously seeking for “church” loyalty or “preacher” loyalty rather than loyalty to the Lord. Either way, we are concerned for our first man’s soul, for he is wrong in his thinking.

Let no one misunderstand. We strongly oppose every evil mentioned above. But the truth is — no man is obligated to bow to anything we teach because we teach it; but, on the other hand, he is obligated to live by every principle that is truly established upon the word of God. It is the duty of every teacher, then, to warn of these evils, but on the basis of God’s authority. It is the duty of every hearer to consider them in the light of Scripture. Greater God-consciousness — on the part of both teacher and hearer — is the needs to make us angry, but we must not let it consume us.

## Cruel Bread

Paul R. Blake

China a catastrophic famine. Official government figures put the number of deaths at 15 million deaths from starvation, but today, scholars estimate it at 30-43 million. The actual figure may never be known.

The subject is still taboo in China, referred to euphemistically as the Three Years of Natural Disasters. Yet it's clear that this famine was mostly man-made by Communist mismanagement.

During the famine, the people made "bread" from a kind of edible earth. But this ingredient lacked nutrients, so those who ate the loaves starved to death on a full stomach.

Other famine foods include the nardoo plant. The spores of this clover fern can be made into bread and porridge. But they contain no proteins, carbohydrates, or vitamins—the essentials for sustaining life. Those who depend upon it for food will have their stomachs filled, but they'll eventually die of starvation.

A rather accurate illustration of the philosophies and reasoning of our world, wouldn't you say? Instead of feasting on the bread of life, most folks fill their minds with television, social media, and pop news and, thus, live morally malnourished and die of spiritual starvation. Sadly, they are surrounded by access to spiritual feasts while they greedily ingest the cruel bread of the Adversary.

"So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 8:3).

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## Falling Away

By – Stacy Crim

A Christian can quickly fall away. It doesn't have to take long at all.

They may have been converted but there was little or no growth. Kind of like the seed that fell on the rock in Jesus' parable. (Luke 8:13) For a short while they are interested in spiritual things but then the former life is missed and they return back as Peter said like the "sow having washed" goes back to "wallowing in the mire". (2 Peter 2:22)

A Christian may be pressured by peers into sin and perhaps an addiction is quickly developed and they are gone, gone in sin and have turned from the Lord. That addiction can be to drugs, alcohol, sexual immorality or perhaps even thievery. Their love for carnal things is much stronger than their love for the Lord. It reminds us of Demas who loved this present world and turned back into it. (2 Timothy 4:10)

The Hebrew writer writes about drifting away from God. "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away." Hebrews 2:1 Drifting can happen quickly like a boat that is quickly swept away by a swift current or a slow drifting away like a boat moving slowly down stream with a calm but shallow breeze. A Christian that is slowly drifting away can be hard to detect by others. There may be subtle changes in attitude, one's attendance, service, giving or study. Each of these can be an indications of an increasing spiritual departure but often go unnoticed because they are kept hidden from others. It may be a very gradual departure from the Scriptures that the Hebrew writer is addressing. Whether a quick or a slow departure from the Lord, a departure from the Lord is a departure from the Lord. The Hebrew writer goes on to say "how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*," Hebrews 2:3 The answer" We cannot neglect our salvation and then expect the Lord to let us escape punishment.

Consider how serious it is to fall away.

"For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame." Hebrews 6:4-6