

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

August 10

2008

Having Fun?

Recently I have noticed that many brethren are placing emphasis upon the idea of making Bible study "fun." I would be the first to admit that the study of God's word and the stories contained therein is thrilling and exciting, but I am also convinced that the word "fun" conveys a concept that is not appropriate when it comes to a study of the inspired word. The word suggests the idea of entertainment. Children have "fun" playing games and engaging in amusing activities. I found a comment in the *American Heritage Dictionary* on the use of the word "fun" to be most interesting. The statement says, "*writers who want to stay on the safe side are advised to avoid it in contexts in which a light tone would not be appropriate.*" The study of God's word should be with reverence and seriousness. Some may be using the word "fun" simply to mean the study of the Bible can and should be an enjoyable activity. However, it is just as easy to use words that readily convey that thought without using a word that suggests the idea of frivolity or entertainment. Let us never be guilty of irreverence when it comes to God and His word. (JH)



When Do We Judge?

We know in this day and time it is necessary to decide in matters that pertain to religion. We have learned by experience and reason that one is not right only because he is sincere in what he thinks and does. We believe that a thing must be proven to be right, or it fails.

Jesus said, "*Judge not, that we be not judged*" (Matthew 7:1, 2). He also said, "*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge*

righteous judgment" (John 7:24). The apostles many times condemned judging among the brethren. It seems that the brethren at Corinth were judging Paul for he said, "*But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self*" (1 Corinthians 4:3). Jesus also is very plain in the statement, "*Ye shall know them by their fruits*" (Matthew 7:16).

We learn by these passages that one is to decide in certain matters. We also learn that the decision must be just and right and not just as it may appear to us, and that God is displeased with other kinds of judging.

Recently we have heard and read statements of the brethren that go something like this, "*We have stayed so close to the letter that we have missed the spirit of things.*" I firmly believe that we must stay with the letter, and also the spirit of things. When Jesus spoke to the woman at the well He said, "*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24). God is the one that furnishes us the truth in worship. We must worship that way to be acceptable to God. It is my obligation to see that my spirit is in the attitude to please God. We are to be "*Fervent in spirit*" (Romans 12:11). This means: "very earnest." There is not a thing required of God for one to do in becoming a Christian, or in service to Him as a Christian, to be engaged in as merely a form.

I am amazed to hear the brethren inviting others to enjoy their fellowship in fun. I do not question their fellowship together in having fun, but I do question their fellowship with God in a service designed to have fun. We enjoy immensely the fellowship of the brethren when we meet at the Lord's table, but it is not acceptable to God unless it is done in the spirit.

This is what I must try to decide about: "Staying with the Letter and missing the spirit." Is such a statement made to get me worked up to the point where I will be willing to strive to do things, thinking that the end justifies the means? By this I will try to work out ways and means to do things never warranted in the scriptures? If so, it is impossible for me to please God, because I have failed to, "*Abide in the doctrine of Christ.*" It might be well for me to consider what Paul had to say when he desired that the brethren be rooted and grounded, "*That Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted*

and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:17-19). How could one become so deluded to think that he could know things higher or deeper, longer or wider than God? Brethren, let us rally to the greatest cause in all the world, marching at His orders, in the spirit of Him who hath called us, and we can have the assurance that it will always please God.

✠ Max Ogden



There Is a Little Church

There is a little church in your community. Its members are your neighbors: ranchers and cowhands, superintendents and laborers, doctors and patients. They meet in a small, unpretentious simple worship services. They plan their work for the Lord as a free and independent church operating according to their ability.

They believe the Bible is God's Word, and must be respected in practice as well as in theory. They would not bind where God has not bound: nor would they loose where God has not loosed. They are people with convictions, willing to sacrifice popularity among men rather than deny the all-sufficiency of God's plan. They invite constructive criticism, and open studies of God's Word. Your right to speak will be respected, by people who insist upon the right to reply.

Believing the primary purpose of Christ's church to be preparation for eternity, this little church places emphasis upon spiritual matters. It is not a social club. It does not usurp the function of civic organizations, the school, or general welfare institutions. Its members are not unmindful of their individual responsibilities in all these fields, but they strive to fill such obligations without altering the function of the Lord s church.

Be our guests! A warm and friendly welcome awaits you. There will be no "special program," no "great things" to impress the fleshly minded, but then, NAZARETH WAS A LITTLE TOWN.

✠ Robert F. Turner

What Does It Take?

Forty eight years ago as I was preaching in my first gospel meeting I had a lady (in fact, she was a relative of mine) to disagree with a point I had made in the lesson that night. I had noted that many were using carnal attractions like food and entertainment to attract large crowds and had noted that there was no Bible authority for churches to be involved in such. As she came out following the lessons she said, "James, if it takes coffee and doughnuts to save men's souls then I think we should use coffee and doughnuts." My reply?? I said, "I agree with you 100%."

She was quite surprised at my answer and you may be also, however, to this day I still agree with her. If "coffee and doughnuts" will save men's souls then let's get all the coffee and doughnuts we can buy and distribute them. However, if we did such not one soul would be saved by such; we would just have a lot of people full of coffee and doughnuts. Paul said, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"* (Romans 1:16). The gospel of Christ is **THE** power of God unto salvation. If we desire the salvations of souls we must use the only thing that will accomplish such, i.e., the gospel of Christ.

✠ James Hahn

Belleville church of Christ

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www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

Sun. Bible Study. 9:30 a.m.
Sun. Morning Worship. . . . 10:30 a.m.
Sun. Evening Worship. 5:00 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study. 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Charles Carpenter. (317) 839-3873
James Hahn. (317) 745-1507

Deacons

Leon Nevins (317) 272-2966
Don Perry. (765) 676-5825
Alvin Stanley. (317) 831-3514
Mike Thomas. (317) 539-2699

Evangelist

James Hahn. (317) 745-1507