

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

May 3

2009

Be Careful: The Kids Are Listening!

Our kids learn from us. Hopefully they learn good things from the positive ideals and examples that we set before them. Unfortunately, they definitely learn bad things from our sinful attitudes and deeds.

I once knew of a large extended family that always gathered for Sunday dinner after the worship services. The grandparents and parents were Christians, and there were a number of children in the group. It so happens that this family was very negative and bitter toward various other Christians and toward the church generally. Their family meals turned out to be regular and constant “gripe” sessions about the congregation and the people in it.

As time went on, not a single one of those grandchildren ever became a Christian. I’ve spent some time wondering why. There are, no doubt, a number of contributing circumstances. But, it seems certain that one big factor was the continual bombardment of negativism that these kids received from their parents and grandparents. After all, why would these young people want to be a part of something that was so “bad” (by their parents’ and grandparents’ description)? Do you see it!?!

We realize that there are no perfect Christians and no perfect congregations. Problems will come up. These problems will have to be addressed. But let’s be sure we handle these problems as the Lord has commanded (Matthew 18:15-17), being careful to avoid all malice, hatred and bitterness towards others (1 Peter 2:1, Colossians 3:8). And, take all precautions to shield your children from the negative attitudes that could, potentially, hinder them from wanting to take up their place in the Lord’s church and in His service. Think!

✍️ Greg Gwin

ARE THERE ANY BEREANS TODAY?

Concerning the people in the Macedonian city of Berea, Luke relates a very refreshing evaluation: *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.”* (Acts 17:11-12). When the word of the Lord was preached to these people, they manifested outstanding characteristics that all individuals would do well to practice. There are various and sundry reactions to the preaching of God’s word. The Bereans demonstrated the proper attitude that hearers should have. Consider the outstanding qualities that they evidenced by their actions and then ask yourself if there are any Bereans today. **THEY WERE:**

Free of Prejudice. *“they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”* Hearers filled with prejudice would not have done this. How different the Bereans were as compared to some of the Lord’s own countrymen: *“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their ears they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”* (Matthew 13:15). Jesus quoted from the prophecy of Isaiah 6:9-10 which applied to the reaction of these people to His teaching. Prejudice involves folly and shame! The wise man wrote: *“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”* (Proverbs 18:13). Prejudice is the lock on the door of the closed mind; the ignorance we usually mistake for reason; the first enemy of information and progress; it is intellectual stigmatism; a perfect combination of conceit and ignorance. Prejudice never saved a soul, nor settled any question in the light of truth and justice. It is the defense of the devil, the shell of a petrified mind and the ceiling on understanding. There is a principle which is a bar against all information and proof against argument. It cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance. **That principle is condemnation before investigation.** This the Bereans did not practice! Are there any Bereans today? How about ourselves? Do we have a readiness of mind to investigate or are we motivated by prejudice?

Not Gullible. This was another quality of the Bereans that was outstanding. Gullible is defined: “easily cheated or tricked; credulous”. While some people are not prejudice, they are gullible to the extent of accepting almost anything that is taught them. We should be of a mind to investigate and then make the proper investigation as the Bereans did. *“and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”* So many today are content to accept most anything and in so doing they are not like the Bereans. We are admonished to: *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”* (I Thessalonians 5:21). Again, *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”* (I John 4:1). Anyone who is sincere does not object to his teaching being examined by the scriptures as to whether those things are so. It is an element of insincerity when preachers object to what they teach being “tried” by the word of God.

Energetic. These people evidence an energetic spirit by searching the scriptures daily. The scriptures that were available to them doubtlessly involved the Old Testament scriptures that were available in the synagogues. These scriptures were written on material that constituted considerable effort in searching. Yet, they did this daily! The lazy, indolent type would have been weighed in the balances and found wanting when confronted with this rather tedious work. Are there any Bereans today? In a day when the scriptures are so conveniently arranged in books, chapters and verses and when Bibles are available that abound in concordances and other types of helps to locate various passages, surely Bereans should exist on every hand! But the pathetic thing is that there is a lack of them. Even members of the church do not qualify at times. They are so lazy in studying the word of God that they neglect preparing the Bible lessons themselves or taking the time to help their children do the same. If they had the spirit of the Bereans, somewhere along the line, they lost it. We need to heed Paul’s admonition: *“not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.”* (Romans 12:11).

The Bereans were not willingly ignorant. (II Peter 3:3-7). They were receptive to the will of God. They were more than hearers. Whatever may be our attitude in hearing God’s word, we must be obedient to the truth. *“therefore many of them believed”*. May the Lord help all of us today to have the spirit of the Bereans.

✍ Bobby K. Thompson

MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

We often study the lives of Bible characters to learn and profit from their examples. Some examples inspire us to faithfulness; others warn us of the consequences of disobedience. We are all familiar with the great men of faith like David, Moses, Abraham, Daniel, Paul and many others. If we are not careful we will be deceived into thinking that I must do some "great" thing or be some well-known individual to be considered a person worthy of mention as a faithful Christian. Let me ask you a question. How familiar are you with Andronicus, Junia, Amplias, Urbane, Stachys, Apelles, Herodion, Narcissus, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus, Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, Philologus, Julia, Nereus, Olympas, Lucius, Jason, Sosipater, Tertius, Gaius, Erastus and Quartus? How often have you heard a sermon using any of these as the subject? However, all of these are mentioned in Romans 16 as saints being greeted by Paul or sending greetings by Paul. Though little is known about any of these we have reason to believe that the greatest statement that can be made of any individual can be said of these, i.e., their name is written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:27). If that is true of any of us (and it is of every faithful Christian) then does it matter what else is known of us? We may never obtain great recognition among men and we may not be long remembered by those who live after we depart this life, but if I gain heaven that exceeds any recognition or praise of man. (JH)

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

Evangelist

James Hahn... (317) 745-1507