

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

June 28

2009

Keeping Our Word

How important is it to you to keep your word? How often do you make a promise and then fail to keep it, or even remember that you made it? Too many people today think little of promises or of keeping their word.

I recently read an article by a Mr. Lewis B. Smedes entitled, "The Power of Promising." Among other things, he said, "When you make a promise, you tie yourself to other persons by the unseen fibers of loyalty." He further said, "All human community, from the ghetto to the global village, depends on the power of promising....Where people no longer have the inner daring to make serious promises or the grit to keep them, human community becomes a combat zone of competing self-maximizers."

Solomon said, *"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few "* (Ecclesiastes 5:2). Jesus said, *"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment "* (Matthew 12:36). Paul said, *"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another"* (Ephesians 4:25).

You may go back and ponder all of the previous quotes again. Two from an uninspired man and three from inspired sources. All emphasize the need for people to keep their word! And yet, more and more people make promises daily and never worry too much if they

fail to keep them. Promises are made in business deals and then forgotten. We make promises when we are married and shortly forget them. We make personal promises and fail to keep them without feelings of guilt and without even a call to apologize when we are faced with the failure to keep our word. This has become a way of life with the world and it is becoming so with many who are God's children.

We excuse ourselves by saying that we are not under oath, or that we just forgot, or that we didn't think anyone took us seriously when we made the promise. But this does not change the facts—we promised and then failed to follow through. In a very real sense it could be said that we lied! All liars are going to be found in the lake of fire after the judgment day (Revelation 21:8).

Some promises are made in times of emotional highs and when the speaker is not thinking straight. Promises are made that we are incapable of carrying out. We need to stop making such and repent of those hasty promises and ask forgiveness of both God and the people involved. God is aware of our every promise and of our motive in making it and why we fail to keep it. We cannot hide from Him, so we must face the facts and stop making excuses!

Honesty is expected of God's people (Romans 12:17) in word as well as deed. Idle words may not be sinful, but we will answer to God for them. We need to be careful with the promises we make during conversations with others. It is possible to forget what one promises. In such cases apologies and repentance are necessary, not just an effort to deny the promise by saying, "I can't remember making it." The use of one's tongue is a serious matter and we need to recognize it. James warned of the misuse of the tongue in James 3:1-10.

So, let us learn to keep our word to our companion in marriage, to our children, to our parents, to those with whom we have business dealings, to those with whom we worship and even to those who might be classified as strangers and enemies. Saints of God should keep this in mind above all other considerations—this is necessary to please God! Let us try to BE RIGHT WITH GOD.

✍ J. F. Dancer, Jr.

Being Faithful

In 1 Corinthians 4:2 Paul declares, *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."* Thayer defines *pistos*, the word translated *faithful*: "1) trusty, faithful 1a) of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties 1b) one who kept his plighted faith, worthy of trust 1c) that can be relied on"

We should all desire to be in that number to whom the Lord will say in that last great day, *"Well done, good and faithful servant"* (Matthew 25:23). To hear those words we must be *"good and faithful servants."* As brother Dancer notes in the preceding article, faithfulness means being true to our word and being dependable. This applies to every area of life. Let's examine some of these.

When two people enter into marriage they declare their love for one another and vow to remain faithful to one another until death. If both are faithful then a lifelong relationship is begun. Sadly, the thousands of divorces that take place each year are testimony to the fact that many are not faithful.

We should also emphasize the necessity of faithfulness as members of a local church. As members of the Lord's body we have a relationship with God and a relationship with other members of the body. Once we have obeyed the gospel we receive the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38-47) and are in fellowship with God. We then have the responsibility to join with other saints where we live to worship and work together as a local church (Acts 9:26-28). When we make known that intent to be "joined" with the saints in a given locality we should be faithful in that relationship. As Thayer defines, we *"can be relied on."*

What about you? As a member here at Belleville, can you be relied on? When the saints assemble here on Sunday morning, Sunday evening or Wednesday evening; can other members here depend upon your being present to encourage them? Men, when you are scheduled to serve in some capacity, are you faithful if you cannot be depended upon to serve?

There are many tasks that need to be performed (cleaning the building, mowing grass, etc.). Can you be depended upon to help in all that you are able to do? Remember, every member is expected to

be faithful. That means you can be depended upon! The only thing some can be depended upon to do is to complain and criticize. That is not faithfulness. I encourage all to be faithful to God and to others.

✍ James Hahn



"What Then?"

On graduation night, a father asked, "Son, what are your plans?" The boy answered, "Dad, you know I'm going to college." The dad said, "That's right, but **what then?**"

The boy replied, "Well, I'll want to get a good job, and hopefully get married." The dad said, "That's also fine, but **what then?**"

The boy answered, "I want to have some kids. Then, after I put the required years on the job, I'll retire." The father replied, "That's good, but **what then?**"

And the boy said, "Well ... uh ... I don't know ... I guess I'll get old and die." The dad said, "That's right, **what then?**"

The boy dropped his head as he realized he had plans for life on earth, but no plans for life beyond this world. The Bible teaches that it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment (Heb. 9:27). **What then?**

✍ David Slain

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