

The Keys Of The Kingdom

March 2018 - Vol: 5 Number: 3



Published By: J.F. Miller
Editor: J.F. Miller

©Copyright 2018 All Rights Reserved

To Visit Our Website
Click Link Below
[Keys Of The Kingdom](#)

Contents

<i>Our Staff</i>	<i>Pg: 3</i>
<i>Editor's Note</i>	<i>Jim Miller Pg: 4</i>
<i>Legalism, Law, and Love</i>	<i>Dub McClish Pg: 12</i>
<i>Church Growth</i>	<i>Jerry Brewer Pg. 18</i>
<i>Watch Ye, Stand Fast In The Faith, Quit You Like Men, Be Strong Pt.1</i>	<i>Michael Hatcher Pg: 21</i>



Our Writing Staff



Jim Miller

Jim Miller: Preacher at the Gray, church of Christ semi-retired, publisher, writer, editor. A member of the Lords church since 1985. Preached in NC, TN, KY, and Maine. Two years Co-hosting Bible Talk Radio. Owner of Keys Of The Kingdom magazine and website.



Michael Hatcher

Michael Hatcher: Preacher Bellview Church of Christ <http://www.bellviewcoc.com> August 1994 to present · Pensacola, Florida. Preacher of the Gospel since the mid 1970s. Preached for the Bellview Church of Christ since 1994. While with Bellview, edited monthly publication "Defender," and weekly bulletin "Beacon." Directed the Bellview Annual Lectureship since 1995 along with editing the book of the lectures.



Dub McClish

H. W. (Dub) McClish: Preached first sermon in June 1954 at Boise, Idaho, at age 16. After 35 years of work as local preacher in 5 states (the last 12 years of which were with the Pearl St. Congregation, Denton, TX), began work under oversight of Pearl Street elders in 1992, devoting time to combined works of Gospel meetings, mission trips, and lectureships and to writing and editing sound Biblical materials.



Jerry Brewer

Jerry Brewer was born in Childress, Texas in 1941 and was baptized into Christ by O. M. Curry in 1954. He attended the Elk City, Okla. School of Preaching, directed by W. R. Craig, in 1969-70 and has done local work in Oklahoma and Texas. He has made three trips to Kenya to preach and teach in the Kalamindi School of Preaching. He currently preaches for the Northeast church of Christ in Elk City, Okla., where he has been for 19 years. He has authored a commentary on Galatians, and formerly published "The Gospel Preceptor," a monthly paper. He is married to the former Sherlene Holley of Carter, Okla. They have six children, and 17 grandchildren.

If you would like to be a guest writer for TKOK you may contact me at jfmiller61@gmail.com.

To announce up coming events like Gospel Meetings, Lectures, Singing events etc... Just use the email link above to contact me. Please feel free to tell others and have them pick up their copy today. Use this link to direct them to our page. http://jfmiller.com/keys-of-the-kingdom/?page_id=1316 .

May God Bless You. Jim and the Staff

Editor's Notes

New Release

Back on November 27th of 2015 I published the book “The Journey” How Larry Became A Christian. It was published first as a Kindle book. On December 21st of 2016 I published it as a paperback. This book was written in story format to teach others how to become a Christian and be added to the Lord's church. My intent and hope was and still is that this book would be passed along as a gift or used as a teaching tool to bring others to Christ. I have just published the companion book “The Journey Continues” The Christian Life (Faithful Unto Death). This book teaches the new Christian what is necessary to do to stay in a saved condition and inherit a home in heaven. Below you will find links to both books in Kindle and paperback format. These would make valuable gifts for your loved one's or friends. Please feel free to go check them out and may God richly bless you.

The Journey

The Journey, How Larry Became A Christian.

Paperback [Click here](#)

Kindle Version [Click here](#)

The Journey Continues

Paperback [Click Here](#)

Kindle Version [Click here](#)

A Little Leaven 2

Jim Miller

Gray, Maine

Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.

We have to ask ourselves, “Can we be just a little liberal”? or, “Can a woman be just a little pregnant”? We also have to admit that there is a scriptural way to be liberal. However, over the years the meaning of this word has been changed from its true meaning. Thayer gives us the original meaning of the word as.

ἀπλότης

haplotēs

Thayer Definition:

1) singleness, simplicity, sincerity, mental honesty
1a) the virtue of one who is free from pretence and hypocrisy

2) not self seeking, openness of heart manifesting itself by generosity

Part of Speech: noun feminine

Brother Dub McClish once explained in his writings what liberalism is today and how the definition has been changed to take away its true meaning. I quote.....

“liberalism” is the attitude and approach to religion that is unwilling to be as strict and definitive as God is in His Word. It is called “liberalism” due to its misplaced “generosity” in “giving away” that which it does not possess. It refuses to bind things that God has bound. This approach treats matters of Scriptural obligation as if they were matters of mere option. Those who are liberal in this sense tend to rely on their emotions and subjective opinions to make presumptions on the grace and mercy of God rather than strictly adhering to the law of Christ.

I contend that anyone adopting this attitude puts their soul in danger of hell fire itself. The liberal today is very covert in their actions at first. Like the serpent in *Gen. 3* they sneak in among our churches and the reek havoc from within. One of their most successful tactics is to start by slowly dividing the brethren, secretly trying to gain others trust with their lies. Once they succeed in persuading a few people (usually those less learned in the scripture) the snowball effect takes place and before you know it you are no longer the Lord's church. It is the dangerous leaven of these heretics that we must always be on guard against. So I ask again (How can one be just a little liberal?).

Paul warned the Ephesians elders with these words:

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified (Acts 20:27-32).

Much like the public school system our church members have been being dumbed down to the point that true biblical teaching can hardly be recognized. Such foolishness as Children's Church, Praise Teams, Hand-Clapping, Dramatic Presentations, Baby Dedications and on and on it goes have taken a foothold within the church. Changes in worship and changes in preaching style have been a real determinant to sound preaching and teaching for many years. Book, chapter, and verse preaching has in many cases disappeared from the pulpit. I for one am astounded when I hear people say there is too much scripture in our preaching. The truth is the leaven of liberalism is Anti Bible and Anti God.

The liberal and their leaven proclaim God's instruction is flawed and that it must change with the times. God's word is now outdated and will not meet mans needs. So these malcontents came up with their own Herminutics.

HERMENEUTICS: simply put is the science of interpretation. True hermeneutics—not man's misplaced, misused, and misunderstood methods—is a systematic application of rules, principles, and knowledge applied to Scriptures in order that one can understand what another actually said or wrote. Hermeneutics when properly defined and applied cannot be as so many claim, "That is only your interpretation!"

There are many today that allege Christianity is an "elastic" religion, that practice a hermeneutic that is eisegesis (reading into the Scriptures) rather than exegesis (reading out of the Scriptures). Many will pick and choose the passages they want, making "logical arguments" to support their choices: These liberal heretics will Claim doctrine (teaching) and gospel (the good news) are not equal. Claiming that logical reasoning cannot be applied to Scripture—that if the Bible

does not explicitly state it then it does not apply to us. They Claim certain books are not “law”—that is the epistles (Acts-Revelation) are simply “love letters” to the churches and were never meant to serve as a “pattern” for all Christians.

Lets make clear here and now what the truth is.....

1) The Bible makes doctrine and gospel equal!

“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” (Rom. 1:16).

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

2) The Bible demands logical reasoning:

“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17).

“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14).

“And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand” (Mat. 15:10).

3) The epistles according to Scripture are Scripture:

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come” (John 16:13).

The epistles were those things of which the Comforter reminded the apostles. Consider what Paul told Timothy concerning those things:

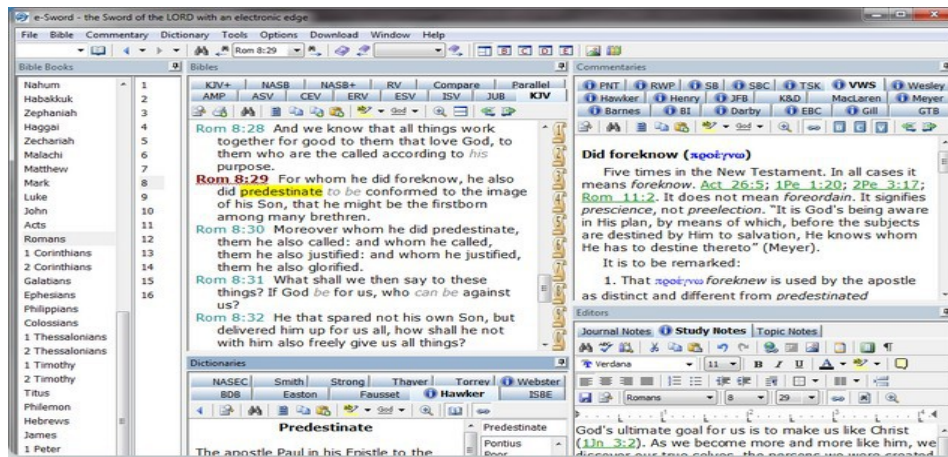
“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:13). “But thou hast fully known my doctrine...” (2 Tim. 3:10).

Hermeneutics, that systematized practice of analyzing Scripture to explain what the writer of a passage already penned does not produce one’s interpretation, but rather the One’s actual meanings. We need to always endeavor to put aside preconceived notions, beliefs, thoughts, and opinions and with determination approach Scripture for guidance, leading that comes from the Almighty!

It does not take a genius rocket scientist to figure out just how dangerous a little leaven is. Liberalism in all its forms (except for that of being liberal in the biblical sense) is wrong. We MUST make a stand we must fight back and get back to the basics of God's word. Friends a little leaven will steal your soul and lead you to hell.

Till Next We Meet
God Bless

E-Sword



e-Sword is a fast and effective way to study the Bible. e-Sword is feature rich and user friendly with more capabilities than you would expect in a free Bible app. The fact that e-Sword is free is just one of the blessings and does not speak of the quality of the app. Below you'll find a list of features that you will discover helps make Bible study both enjoyable and enriching. [Get it here](#)



This is a new website created to expose the Compromised/liberal teaching institutions that claim affiliation with the church. The following is from our home page and you will find a link to the site at the end.

The Shipwreck of Colleges and Schools of Preaching

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Tim. 4:3).

Why and how did compromise and/or liberalism come to dominate the preaching schools and colleges of today? This Site is dedicated to trying to answer these questions while showing that (1) compromise and liberalism have already destroyed the “Big Gun” Colleges and (2) the way that compromise is having a devastating effect on our smaller schools of preaching. These smaller schools, begun by congregations to replace the colleges that went off headlong into error, are now teetering on the edge because of their compromises.

There was a time when men who were sound in the faith taught younger men in the church how to preach and teach. We believe this should still be the norm. However, as sadly seen in these institutions today, this is no longer the case. Most people in the congregations have been dumbed down to the point that they believe that unless a preacher has a piece of paper stating he has been trained formally, he is unable or unfit to preach.

Long ago, several of the colleges came on the scene, followed a few decades ago by the rise of the preacher training schools. At their beginnings, the colleges did a good work in teaching sound doctrine to men who aspired to go out and preach

the Word. They were led by faithful men who would not allow anything other than the Truth to be taught. The shame in all this is that compromise and liberal doctrine slowly crept in and made spiritual shipwreck of the colleges. Thus the preacher training schools were born. But, compromise has become the bane of these smaller schools in recent years. Today it is impossible to find a school untainted by compromise wherein men can be trained and taught.

There are many reasons for the downfall of our preacher training schools. Like many good ideas with good intentions, the lust for “more” gets in the way, leading the institution to stray from its original purpose. The desire to be “big,” which creates the need for large amounts of money, seems inevitably to lead to fellowship concessions. Small compromises begin to be made to satisfy this “need”—and error begins to creep in.

Money, power, and politics have become big factors in some cases. It takes large sums of money to operate a school, especially one with a large faculty and a building program. The desire to expand— and the prestige that comes with growth—can easily replace emphasis on sound doctrine.

The fact is that some schools are like many preachers. Much/most of what they **teach** is correct, but they may omit certain things that are unpopular with or disagreeable to their supporters, thus failing to teach “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). Likewise, while their **practices** may be right for the most part, they have failed to be true to God’s Word in some crucial matters. Principal among these is the practice of embracing in their fellowship those who are not in fellowship with God and His Son, which the New Testament forbids (Ephesians 5:11; 2 John 9–11; et al.). Although some of the schools have an appearance of soundness, a closer examination reveals that they are not ((Mat. 7:15–20; 2 Tim. 3:5).

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers (Tit. 1:9).

Had our institutions remained faithful and content to teach the Truth to men seeking to be preachers of the Word, congregations of the Lord’s people would not be facing the great crisis we are facing today.

As earlier indicated, the twin blights of liberalism and compromise now permeate to one degree or another every teaching institution brethren operate. This is shameful, but not really surprising since churches long ago gave away the responsibility and control of training sound men. What we have today are

institutions, especially at the college level, that churn out liberal-minded preachers who are willing to compromise, thus spreading error wherever they go.

This site has been established to expose these schools for who and what they are. We will endeavor to provide the proof necessary for you to make sound judgments for yourself. We have no doubt that many, out of blind loyalty, will defend these schools as being sound teaching institutions. We will simply put forth the facts and let you judge their soundness or lack thereof.

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine (1 Tim 1:5–10).

[Click Here](#) to visit our site.

LEGALISM, LAW, AND LOVE

*Dub McClish
Denton, Texas*

Introduction

Is obedience to Christ optional or unnecessary? Are belief in and love toward Christ the only things required of sinners to be saved? Some (the we-are-not-under-law-but-under-grace crowd) would have it so and thus teach. To them the New Testament is but a collection of "love letters" from God that are bereft of any authoritative or "legal" content. Who would even consider denying that the New Testament, with its incomparable glad tidings of salvation for sinners, is the revelation of the incomparable (and all but incomprehensible) love of God and His son for fallen man? Having said this, it is nonetheless utter folly to deny that this New Testament "love story" is also God's law for all men, for all time, since Calvary.

Paul recognized the existence of "the law of Christ" and even identified one of its precepts (Gal. 6:1-2). He knew that he was "under law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21), which he elsewhere described as "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2). James twice referred to the New Testament as the "law of liberty" (Jam. 1.25; 2:12). Besides these explicit statements, there are numerous implicit statements and principles that demand the conclusion that (1) the New Testament of Christ is God's law for the Christian Age and (2) that all men are amenable to it.

Are We "Legalists"?

The liberals, who do not want to be bound by Divine law (i.e., the New Testament), often hurl *legalist* into the teeth of those of us who emphasize obedience to New Testament commands. We will do well to examine this term and the accusation made concerning it. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines legalism as "a strict, literal, or excessive conformity to the law or to a religious or moral code." Webster notwithstanding, I question the possibility of "excessive conformity" to Divine law (the expression has almost a pejorative connotation).

"Strict, literal...conformity" to His will is exactly what the Lord requires of those who would be saved (Mat. 7:21-23; Heb. 5:9; et al.).

Men who specialize in taking liberties with God's Word (i.e., liberals) actually pay us a compliment when they call us, by at least part of Webster's definition, "legalists." First, to be a legalist implies belief in the existence of law. I freely confess my conviction that the New Testament is the Divine law under which we live and which will be the final standard of our judgment (John 12:48). Second, I am quite willing to "plead guilty" to insisting upon a strict adherence to that law.

Perhaps what the accusers hope to do by calling us "legalists" is to class us with the first-century scribes and Pharisees. Most certainly, the Master scathingly rebuked them on more than one occasion, but did He ever rebuke them for "strict conformity" to God's law? No—not once! Rather, He chided them for elevating human opinion, precept, and tradition to the level of Divine law, thus making their own religious law (Mat. 15:3, 6-9). Further, He condemned them for overemphasizing parts of God's law while utterly rejecting and/or neglecting other parts of it (23:23), which also had the effect of creating their own laws. Liberals who refuse to be bound by God's law (or even deny its existence) fits the behavior of those first-century enemies of the Lord much better. Thus the modern counterparts of the ancient scribes and Pharisees are not those who insist upon strict adherence to Divine law (i.e., "legalists"). Today's liberals match up with them very well in their contempt for God's law. As did the Christ, so should we condemn and expose them.

"Legalism" and Obedience

Does calling for strict adherence/obedience to Divine law constitute "legalism," per the charge of liberals? There is no clearer principle in the entire Bible than this: Man's paramount duty is to obey God. In much of his life, Solomon miserably failed to honor the pivotal conclusion he finally reached, but it remains nonetheless true: "This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecc. 12:13). King Saul "learned the hard way" that an outward show of religion in offerings and sacrifices is no substitute for obedience. Samuel sharply reproved him with words that ring true right down to our time:

Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. (1 Sam. 15:22).

On the other hand, from the beginning, disobedience of God's law has been synonymous with sin—and it still is. The disobedience of Eve, and then Adam, was the very vehicle upon which sin entered the world (Rom. 5:12, 19). The penalty of physical death came upon mankind because of sin (v. 12). Even worse, the perfect holiness of God demanded (and demands) the sentence of eternal spiritual death—separation from God in Hell—for sinful men: "For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (6:23). Sin and disobedience are synonyms, hence it should—and does—make perfect sense to substitute disobedience for sin in the foregoing passage: "The wages of disobedience is death." The fact that disobedience results in damnation further emphasizes the necessity of obedience.

Ever-Present Divine Law or Universalism?

There has never been a time when man was not accountable to a law system from God. The concepts of sin and law are inseparably bound up together (no law, no sin [Rom. 4:15]; no sin, no law [5:13]). "All have sinned" from the very beginning (3:23a; cf. 5:13–14), therefore all have been under some system of Divine law from the beginning. Moreover, all continue to "fall short" (3:23b). [Note: *have sinned* is an aorist tense form, referring to past completed action, while *fall short* is a present tense form, indicating present and continuing action.] Only if mankind has always been (and ever will be) under law from God can it be said that men have always been (and ever will be) sinners. It is impossible to conceive of sin in the absence of law. As unspiritual as King Saul was, he recognized this constant principle in his statement to Samuel: "I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of Jehovah" (1 Sam. 15:24). John succinctly expressed this principle that has no exceptions: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4, KJV; cf. 5:17). If, as some now allege, men are no longer under law to God, what shall we conclude about sin? What a heinous chain of heresy such antinomian thinking begets, including the following links:

- 1) The only ones whom the death of Christ benefited were those who lived before Calvary.
- 2) God simply abrogated the law systems He had formerly enacted and did not replace them with another.
- 3) It is therefore impossible for anyone living in the Christian Age to sin.
- 4) Hence, the death of Christ was unnecessary and inapplicable with respect to

those who have lived since that event.

In the absence of sin there is no condemnation. Thus those who argue that grace in the Christian Age frees us from Divine law imply that, since the cross, the egregious doctrine of unconditional universalism has been in effect. Liberals must face the fact that it is impossible to disobey nonexistent law.

Rather than being free from condemnation by the **absence** of law (per the liberals), we are actually freed from it by the **power** of law. That which Paul said was true concerning himself is true of all: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). We correctly identify this law with "the truth" which makes us free (John 8:32; cf. 17:17) and the "perfect law of liberty" (Jam. 1:25; cf. 2:12). It is sad, but true, that the Lord will render His vengeance to those who know not God, and to those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might (2 The. 1:7-9).

What About Love?

If *love* (see opening paragraph) is Scripturally defined, then, indeed love of Christ is all that is required of sinners for salvation. Alas, liberals do not seem to comprehend its Scriptural meaning. Where is the liberal who knows (or who will acknowledge) the inseparable connection between loving and obeying the Christ? To the liberal, *love of Christ* appears to have more to do with shadow and symbol than with substance. It often involves such things as getting emotionally worked up, shouting "praise the Lord," fluttering raised hands, or maybe singing loudly some "contemporary Christian song" about loving God or His Son. (Lest I be misunderstood, I am not saying we should not be emotionally involved in our worship, that it is wrong to utter the phrase, *praise the Lord*, or that the singing of newer songs (assuming they are Scriptural) is somehow inherently unscriptural.) Yet the Bible is explicit and clear in its declaration of this love-obedience union.

The Bible goes far beyond mere symbols, emotions, and words—all of which can be very fickle and deceitful—as indicators of love for the Lord. Love for Christ brings us right back to the Bible emphasis on obedience to Divine **law**. According to Christ Himself, our obedience to Christ is the expression and proof of genuine love for Him:

If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.... He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that

loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him.... He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.... If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love (John 14:15, 21, 24; 15:10).

John states that the same standard of proof applies to one's love for the Father: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). If love of one another requires more than mere verbal expression, how much more does the love of God and His Son (3:18). In light of the passages above, one must conclude that there is no way to demonstrate genuine love for the Son of God except by obedience to Him.

Conclusion

Those who insist that we are under no system of Divine law since the cross or that it is somehow "unspiritual" to emphasize "commandment-keeping" and obedience under Christ are not lovers of Christ—by His own definition. Plainly put, careful obedience to Christ **does not** constitute "legalism" as defined by liberals, equating it with the behavior of the scribes and Pharisees. On the other hand, careful obedience to Christ **does** constitute "legalism" as defined by the dictionary: "strict, literal conformity to the law." Therefore, by dictionary definition, **"legalism" is a valid synonym for Biblical love.**

The old Priscilla Owens hymn, "Give Me the Bible," has had it just right all along: "Precept and promise, law and love combining." There is the beautiful Scriptural balance of law, love, and obedience. May we never allow ourselves to be intimidated by the liberals' charge of "legalism" just because we insist that men must obey the commandments—the law—of Christ.

[**Note:** I wrote this MS for and it was published as an "Editorial Perspective" in the June 2000 edition of *The Gospel Journal*, of which I was editor at the time.]



***Your Site for Bible Exposition, Exegesis, and
Commentary on a wide variety of topics and passages
<http://thescripturecache.com>***

***We do allow you to print this off on your
computer and give it away, you may make as
many copies as you wish as long as you Never
charge for it and Never make any changes to it.
You may also pass on this publication in its
PDF format to anyone you like with NO
changes or Charge.***

“Church Growth”

Jerry C. Brewer
Elk City, OK

Ill-informed, Biblically ignorant, and carnally minded members of the church, who are tainted with denominational influences, generally become overly concerned when the “church doesn’t grow.” By that, they mean that numbers are not being added to the membership and they usually lay the blame at the feet of the local preacher. That concept is as far from the New Testament as the worship of Mary by Catholics. The only kind of “church growth” that is mentioned in the New Testament is the spiritual growth of individual members. Peter commanded, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2). There is not a single precept, inference or example in the New Testament about the preacher “growing the church” and those who complain about him are the same ones who have failed to grow spiritually, as Peter enjoins.

There are even congregations that are otherwise “sound” whose members believe an increase in numbers is the responsibility of the preacher. And, though they would never admit it, they view the preacher as their “Pastor” whose job is to “get things going” and bring in numbers. They need to read First and Second Timothy and Titus again. Those books constitute the “manual” for gospel preachers and Paul did not say a single word about “church growth” as part of the work of an evangelist. Not only is that the case, but there is not a single passage in the New Testament that makes “church growth” the responsibility of any Christian. There are, however, a number of passages which lay out responsibilities and examples for evangelism by all Christians.

In Matthew’s account of the Great Commission, Jesus said, “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*” (Matt. 28:19). Mark’s account reads this way: “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*” (Mark 16:15). Luke recorded, “*that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*” (Luke 24:47). In none of those accounts did the Lord say, “grow the church.”

“Church growth” is not the mission of the church. If that were so, then games, door prizes, \$20 bills strategically taped to the underside of the pews, concerts,

dramas, puppet shows, carnivals, bingo, and other entertainments could be provided to “grow the church.” Growth in numbers of any congregation does not result from those things. It results from, 1) preaching the gospel in its simplicity to the lost and, 2) obedience to the gospel by hearts which “*hunger and thirst after righteousness*” (Matt. 5:6). It is the responsibility of the preacher to do the first and the responsibility of lost souls to do the latter. No congregation’s numbers will increase unless those things are present.

Neither does the local preacher have the sole responsibility to teach the lost. That is the responsibility of every Christian. When the church was scattered from Jerusalem upon the death of Stephen, “*Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word*” (Acts 8:4). It is worthy of note in that chapter that, “*they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles*” ([Emph. JB] (Acts 8:1). The preachers (the apostles) did not go “every where preaching the word.” Who went “every where preaching the word”? The members of the church in Jerusalem. In Samaria, and on the Gaza road the church’s numbers increased because of Philip who “*preached Christ unto them*” (Acts 8:5) and to the Ethiopian he, “*preached unto him Jesus*” (Acts 8:35). Philip, and those who “went every where preaching the word” preached Christ as Jesus had commanded in the Great Commission. We later learn that those who were “*scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch*” (Acts 11:19). As a result of their preaching, “*The hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord*” (Acts 11:21). There was “church growth”—“a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.” Very simply, the church “grew” because faithful Christians loved men’s souls, preached the gospel of Christ to the lost, and those to whom they preached obeyed and were saved by the blood of Christ. There was no “Pastor” among them who was charged with “making the church grow.”

If neither preachers nor other members are charged with “church growth,” then whose responsibility is it? According to Paul, it is God’s. Of himself and Apollos, Paul asked the church at Corinth, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Cor. 3:5-6). the church “grows” when the gospel is preached, men obey it, and they are added to the church (Acts 2:47).

Legion are church members (and even elders) who carp and complain about “church growth,” blame the preacher for its lack, replace him with one who will “get things going” and then sit back and do nothing while he works his public relations “magic.” There are three reasons a church should stop supporting a

preacher, and none of those has anything to do with growth in church numbers. A preacher who preaches false doctrine should not be supported, but marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17-18). If he refuses to preach “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) he should not be supported. If he sins, bringing public shame on Christ, and refuses to repent, he should not be supported. But as long as the preacher is living according to the doctrine of Christ and preaching it in its simplicity and completeness (1 Tim. 4:16), the church is duty bound to support him to the very best of its ability. *“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel”* (1 Cor. 9:14).

A faithful gospel preacher whom we once knew was told that he was responsible for the church’s lack of growth. After hearing that charge, he developed a form to hand out to members of the congregation, on which they could write the names and contact information of prospects, including their family members. Of the 30 or 40 he handed out, only one member returned it, with the note that this member didn’t know anyone and had no names for him. The gospel preacher who is faithful to his charge (2 Tim. 4:1-5) is not a public relations expert charged with “church growth” and those who believe he is need to repent or find a comfortable denomination with the kind of “Pastor” they desire.

If every member of the church took the words of Christ seriously, instead of considering the preacher a “hireling” to “grow the church,” numbers would increase, not because numbers were being sought, but because Christians were obeying the Lord. “Church growth” is God’s province. Ours is to “preach the word.”

We invite you to visit our [New Website](#) that is..

**DEDICATED TO REFUTING THE
FALSE DOCTRINES OF MAN**

If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Watch Ye, Stand Fast In The Faith, Quit You Like Men, Be Strong 1

(1 Cor. 16:13; Eph. 6:10)

*Michael Hatcher
Pensacola, Florida*

INTRODUCTION

Paul has heard some disturbing words about the church at Corinth from the house of Chloe. Thus, he wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians to correct the problems that had crept into the church. As he comes to the close of the book, he gives them some very pointed commands. Regardless of whether these are specific military terms, as some have discussed, they can be used in a militaristic application.

When we obey the Gospel, we enter into the Lord's army. Since the basic function of an army is to fight, we as Christians enter into a fight with our marching orders clearly set forth. It is not a battle with physical armaments such as bombs and guns, but a spiritual battle against the forces of evil.

This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare (1 Tim. 1:18).

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses (1 Tim. 6:12).

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:3).

I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith (2 Tim. 4:7).

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

As such, these four imperatives were important for the Corinthian brethren as they battle against the errors that had worked themselves into the congregation and in their battle against the worldly forces of evil.

We are also in the battle against the forces of evil. We, as they, "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the

rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*” (Eph. 6:12). The kingdom of darkness uses falsehoods and lies. It appeals to the “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16). It makes sin pleasurable (Heb. 11:25) to enslave us to it (John 8:34). Thus, we enter into this warfare against these spiritual forces of evil.

There is also a battle in the church of our Lord. Jesus warned, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mat. 7:15). Peter said, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of” (2 Pet. 2:1-2). We thus are given the admonition to, “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Since we must fight those who will pervert “the faith,” we need these exhortations that Paul gives the church at Corinth as much as they did.

WATCH YE

One tactic in winning a war is to use the element of surprise. Thus there is the need to watch. Based upon the Uniform Code of Military Justice a soldier who sleeps while on duty “shall be punished, if the offense is committed in time of war, by death or such other punishment as a court-martial may direct, but if the offense is committed at any other time, by such punishment other than death as a court-martial may direct” (Punitive). Failure to watch, then, is a serious offense.

Failure to watch in the spiritual realm is even more deadly. We must always be alert and on the lookout for the attacks of the enemy. When we are spiritually indifferent, careless, and not vigilant, we are in grave danger. Jesus told Peter to “watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation” (Mat. 26:41), but Peter slept. Later that same night, Peter followed our Lord afar and when asked if he was “with Jesus of Galilee” (26:60) denied Him three times (26:70-74).

We learn that prayer is one of the means for watching; the two go together. In concluding the discussion of our spiritual warfare, Paul admonished, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph. 6:18). He would also state, “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2). Prayer helps us to have our spiritual eyes opened.

Another means of watching is a knowledge of and study of the Word of God. In Ephesians 6:10-18, Paul ends his admonition with praying and watching but precedes it with the armor the Christian must put on. Each item in the Christian

armor has direct reference to God's Word: truth, righteousness, Gospel of peace, shield of faith, and the Word of God. Without a good working knowledge of the Scriptures, we leave ourselves open to the attacks of Satan. When Satan attacked (tempted) Jesus, Jesus quoted Scripture to him (Mat. 4:1-11), which put Satan to flight. No wonder the Psalmist would state, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psa. 119:11).

Thus, we must watch against Satan. Peter wrote, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). Satan is always on the prowl, always looking for ways to destroy us. However, it is impossible to watch and be on guard against an enemy when many do not even believe one exists. Satan is real and has many and varied ways of attacking. He will attack us by using the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride or vainglory of life (1 John 2:16).

Satan will also use temptation to attack us. When Jesus told Peter to watch and pray (Mat. 26:41), the purpose was that he does not enter into temptation. Jesus knew Peter would be severely tempted and the only way to overcome it was by being spiritually alert (watchful) and praying. James writes, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jam. 1:14-15). Unless we can recognize the temptation, we will not be prepared to overcome it.

Trials are another weapon in Satan's arsenal. When James begins his book, he first deals with the proper use and blessings that can come as a result of the trials we face (1:2-12). If we do not use those trials properly, we will not be blessed; we will fail and Satan will have accomplished his purposes. As Jesus explains the parable of the sower, the seed that fell into the stony places represents the man who hath no "root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended" (Mat. 13:21).

Another method that Satan will use to attack is false teachers and their "teachings." We previously noted what Jesus and Peter said about false teachers (Mat. 7:15; 2 Pet. 2:1-2). However, Peter adds, "many shall follow their pernicious ways" (2:3). We have the need, thus, to watch and be on guard for false teachers. John writes, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). We must continue to put everyone to the test of God's Word, as Paul said: "Prove all things" (1 The. 5:21). We must realize the sneaky way Satan will introduce error and appear righteous. "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall

be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:14-15). If we are not vigilant, Satan will be able to sneak in unawares and destroy us, even if we know he is the enemy and know his tactics (2 Cor. 2:11).

In being watchful in this battle against Satan, we need to watch for opportunities to be useful. Jesus, in His battle against the forces of evil “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). Likewise, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10). Opportunities will come and go, thus we must always be on the watch for them.

STAND FAST IN THE FAITH

We have the admonition to be stable. Far too many brethren are vacillating or wavering. They are “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4:14). Far too many fall into temptation and sin. Then we have many that vacillate between being hot and cold—they can never be depended upon.

The Scriptures repeatedly encourage us to be faithful and to faithfulness. There is a call to be a faithful steward of God’s message (1 Cor. 4:2), and those who are faithful are the ones who receive the reward. “His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mat. 25:21). The ones who endure to the end will be saved (10:22). H. Bremner mentions six results of a lack of steadfastness: it “(1) hinders our spiritual growth; (2) mars our usefulness; (3) imperils our salvation; (4) is a stumbling-block to others; (5) a great offence to Christ; (6) spoils our spiritual joys” (568).

Our standing firm must be “in the faith.” To be able to stand fast in the faith, one must first be in the faith. Paul writes, “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2). We have access to God’s grace through **the** faith. The faith must be obeyed: “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7). That obedience involves believing in God, Jesus as the Son of God, and that He died for our sins (the Gospel). Then one must repent of his sins; make a confession of his faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and be immersed in water for his forgiveness. He must then live according to the faith or stand fast in them.

To stand fast and firm in the faith, we must know the faith. Paul put it this way: “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (2 The. 2:15). This is the Gospel we have been taught: “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand” (1 Cor.

15:1). We must also learn how to apply the faith to the problems and temptations that come our way. If Satan tempted us like he did Jesus, would we have been able to call upon the Scriptures that He called upon and apply those specific verses He used to the temptations. We must learn the faith in such a way that we also can apply it to the temptations and problems that come our way.

We also need to have confidence in the faith. John writes, “this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith” (1 John 5:4). However, our faith (personal faith) that gives us the victory must be based upon the solid rock of Jesus the Christ and His teachings. When we have such faith, then we can say with Paul, “for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12). One reason is because we are “Hold[ing] fast the form of sound words” (1:13).

We should realize, though, that while we cannot yield an inch regarding the faith, when it comes to optional matters (before something can be optional, it must first be authorized), we need to be willing to forgo our rights for others. Paul was willing to forgo his right to eat meats if the eating of them caused his brother to sin: “Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (1 Cor. 8:13). So in things of an optional nature: “*Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Phi. 2:3).

QUIT YOU LIKE MEN

This phrase comes from a single word in the original and means, “conduct oneself in a courageous way” (Arndt, Danker, Bauer). Others have described it in various ways: be manly, be invincible, be resolute, etc. Vine defines it, “signifies to make a man of (*anēr*, a man);... to play the man” (242). Christians are not to be childish and weak, but manly and courageous in their demeanor. We are in a war and we need to be heroes in the battle.

God’s Word has been given to us to bring us to maturity. “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). It is interesting to see how some others translate “perfect man” (Greek—*teleios*): “fullgrown man” (ASV), “a mature man” (NASV), “to mature manhood” (ESV). We, as Christians, must have the proper desire for the nourishment that will bring us to maturity: “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2). The Corinthian brethren had not grown properly:

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither

yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

Thus, there was the need to call them—and us—to spiritual maturity.

The other characteristic of this imperative is that we are to be courageous. We cannot have cowards in the battle against Satan and his forces. *Courage* is defined by one as “That quality of mind which enables one to face dangers, difficulties, threats, pain, etc., without fear; bravery, boldness, intrepidity, pluck.” Satan is no weakling; he is strong and powerful. Peter describes Satan as a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8). Notice how Paul describes our enemy prior to telling us to put on the whole armor of God: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*” (Eph. 6:12). *Principalities, power, rulers* are not descriptions of a weakling.

Lack of courage is soundly condemned in the Scriptures. Paul writes, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear [cowardice or timidity]; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7). John reveals the end of those who are cowardly: “But the fearful [coward or timid], and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

Satan is going to throw everything in our way in his attempt to destroy us. Thus, we must have courage to contend with the difficulties of life that we all face, bear up under the opposition and persecution he brings, and to endure through the temporary defeats that we might face.

We must also have boldness to proclaim the Gospel of Christ. The apostles prayed, “that with all boldness they may speak thy word” (Acts 4:29) resulting in their speaking “the word of God with boldness” (4:31). Immediately after Saul’s conversion, “he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus” (9:27) and then in Jerusalem, “he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him” (9:29). Even though his life was threatened, he continued to fight the good fight (2 Tim. 4:7). When Paul was in Corinth, Luke records the following:

And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was* Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto

the Gentiles (Acts 18:4-6).

How we need brethren today who have the same courage to further the cause of Christ even in the face of great opposition. We also need brethren who have the courage to defend the cause of Christ, the Truth, against false teachers and their doctrines. Today there are all sorts of damnable doctrines being taught, both by denominations and even within the church. This is nothing new, but it takes courage by brethren to take the stand that needs to be made. We have seen that when one has the courage to take the stand, he will come under attack by those without and within. We must be willing to be hated by both the world and our own brethren. It takes courage knowing the abuse that will come. We need spiritual heroes in the strife, and every Christian needs to be one and support those who are.

We will continue our study next month.



[Click Here](#)

Come visit us on FaceBook get scriptural answers to your questions.