

RESIGNATION

There was a good woman, who, when she was ill, being asked whether she was willing to live or die, answered: "Which God pleaseth."

"But," said one standing by, "if God should refer it to you, which would you choose?"

"Truly," said she, "if God would refer it to me, I would even refer it back to Him again."

—An Overturned Barrel

THINK ON THESE THINGS

Philippians 4:8

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Dad's 'Preaching' Bibles

By AL DIESTELKAMP

After the death of parents, one of the bittersweet tasks that face the children is to go through, and split up (or dispose of) all their worldly possessions. It's been a few years since my siblings and our spouses did that very thing. For the most part, it was a rewarding experience. It brought us together more often than usual, and evoked cherished memories.

I don't remember how it happened that I ended up with two of Dad's New Testaments—but I did. Both of them are the size that fit in the pocket of a suit coat—the kind he used most frequently when preaching. As he mounted the pulpit area he would reach in his pocket for his Bible much like Wyatt Earp going to his holster.

One of the Bibles was obviously newer than the other, but neither was in very good condition due to wear and tear.

Both books have been sitting on my desk ever since I brought them home. A few days ago I wanted to check a passage in the King James Version, so I reached for one of Dad's Bibles.

I got distracted from my mission by the things pasted inside the leather covers. There were favorite poems that I remember him reciting in sermons from back when I was a child. There were even two poems that I had written.

As I moved through the pages of the Bible I found that nearly every place where the publisher had left a blank space, there was a sermon outline, written in his own handwriting. Even in some places where there was no room, he squeezed in three or four points which had obviously served as sermon notes on a particular text. Dad was known for his brief outlines. They were often on the backs of his business cards, in handwriting that would make a doctor jealous for its lack of legibility.

This re-discovery solved a mystery for me. I remember searching his file cabinets for sermon outlines for more than fifty years of preaching, finding only a handful of outlines in one small accordin file folder. No doubt, in his later years when he could no longer preach, he cleaned out his files to spare us the "trouble."

He didn't throw out his "preaching" Bibles—as worn and tattered as they were—and I'm glad he didn't.

I plan to use some of his outlines in my preaching. I'll probably type them into my computer and print them out on my laser printer, and his three-point business card size outlines will end up three pages long. And yet, the preaching from the neatly printed outlines will never be better than Dad's when he used his "preaching" Bible.

Let me share with you just two examples of the treasure I found in Dad's preaching Bibles—a typical sermon outline and a favorite poem:

Walk With God

1. Walk not in darkness—Jn. 8:12; 1 Jn. 2:9-11.
2. Walk in the light—Isa. 2:5; 1 Jn. 1:7.
3. Walk circumspectly—Eph. 5:15.
(without reproach—unblamable)
4. Walk worthy of the Lord—Col. 1:10.
(becomingly)
5. Walk in Him—Col. 2:6.
(stay in the family)
6. Walk in wisdom—Col. 4:5.
7. Walk after God—Deut. 13:4.
8. Walk before God—Gen. 17:1.
9. Walk with God—Gen. 5 - Enoch; Heb. 11:5.

My Bible and I

*We've traveled together,
My Bible and I,
Through all kinds of weather,
With smile or with sigh!
In sorrow or sunshine,
In tempest or calm,
Thy friendship unchanging,
My lamp and my psalm.*

*We've traveled together,
My Bible and I,
When life had grown weary,
And death e'en was nigh!
But all through the darkness
Of mist or of wrong,
I found there a solace,
A prayer, and a song.*

*So now who shall part us,
My Bible and I?
Shall scoffers or skeptics,
Or doubters who try?
Shall shadow for substance,
Or stone for good bread,
Supplant thy sound wisdom,
Give folly instead?
Ah, no, my dear Bible,
Exponent of light!
Thou sword of the Spirit,
Put error to flight!
And still through life's journey,
Until my last sigh,
We'll travel together,
My Bible and I*

—Author unknown

Compartmentalized Faith

By **ANDY DIESTELKAMP**

Polls reveal that an overwhelming percentage of people believe in God. Several years ago (1993) I did some unscientific polling of our community on a variety of subjects. It revealed that 94% of the citizens of Pontiac (a midwestern town of about 10,000) believe in God. Of those believers in God, 89% said they believed the Bible was inspired by God and 88% said they believed that Jesus was the Son of God. While national figures are not that high, it is still the majority that say they believe in God and His word.

So why does our nation appear to be getting increasingly godless in its behavior? There is probably no one specific reason, but there is a general reason. For many, faith in

Some Questions for Challengers of Decisive Elders

By **AL DIESTELKAMP**

Judging from articles in gospel journals, as well as discussions on some of the internet "lists," there is a growing controversy over the authority of elders.

There may be isolated situations in which elders have been guilty of "being lords" (1 Pet. 5:3). I have no doubt that they will "give account" (Heb. 13:17) for this to the Chief Shepherd. What appears to me to be far more common are elders who go to the other extreme in failing to "rule" (1 Tim. 5:17). They, too will give account.

Some argue that elders are to lead solely by example—that they have no authority to make decisions. I've read the arguments, but some unanswered questions linger:

1. Why is there a need to "appoint" specific men to be examples to the flock? Every Christian should be an example.

2. Why must there be a plurality of elders? Should we not respect the example of one godly man?

3. If there are two elders and one dies, does the other one have to resign? If so, why? If oversight is merely leading by example what would this man do differently after he resigned?

4. Why must an elder be married with children? Cannot a single man be an effective leader, worthy of being an example?

A page (or less) in a future issue of *Think* is open to a brother who will answer all four of the above questions.

God is something that is readily compartmentalized. Compartmentalize means "to separate into isolated compartments or categories." The key words in that definition are "separate" and "isolated."

For many, faith is something that is snugly tucked into a cubbyhole in one's mind. It is only retrieved upon entering a church building. Otherwise, it remains rolled up and out of public view and has no practical use except in cases of emergency. Often, when probed about personal faith, many will admit to having it but refuse to disclose its practical application in their lives. "That is private," we are told.

The saving faith described in scripture was never intended to be compartmentalized in the life of the believer. Nevertheless, the practice is common in a culture that idolizes the separation of church and state. The separation and isolation of faith has produced people who, in all seriousness, claim to oppose the immorality of abortion yet promote legislation and practices that support, if not encourage, abortion. We are told, "You can't legislate morality." It is amazing how often this line is parroted. If people mean by it that the government can't legislate what people think or feel in their hearts, then that is obviously true. However, since when has our inability to legislate against hate kept us from legislating against the immorality of murder? At the same time that some are trying to define "hate speech" so as to legislate against it, many of the same are defending a woman's right to kill her baby.

It is a pathetic people who get more worked up about one baseball player's foolish stereotypes of New Yorkers than about the hundreds of thousands of babies that are torn from their mothers' wombs each year with the protection of government legislation. Who is the extremist, the one who writes a diatribe against the crushing of unborn babies' bones and skulls, or the one who calls a woman's right to destroy her baby something as trite as a choice?

Jeremiah wrote about why the nation of Israel was going to fall. The people would steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, serve other gods and then go and stand in the temple of Jehovah and pretend like everything was just fine. By going to the temple, many of the Jews believed they were "delivered (free) to do these things," (Jer. 7:1-11). They had compartmentalized their faith.

The Pharisees of Jesus' day would make long prayers for pretense but then take advantage of little old ladies. They would scrupulously pay tithes of the smallest things but then would neglect justice, mercy and faith

(Matt. 23:14,23). They had compartmentalized their faith.

The same happens today. For many their faith is restricted to a church building but has little practical expression in their everyday lives. They compartmentalize. Compartmentalization is used to excuse themselves from the inconveniences of their faith. It relieves them from taking a stand. It allows saints to live like sinners. It is hypocrisy.

How uncomfortable people get when others actually live their faith and act on their beliefs. A frequent defensive reaction is to call such people extremists or troublemakers. Remember the girl a couple of years ago who refused to wear a softball uniform that advertised a local tavern? She refused to promote a business whose primary function was to glamorize the bar scene. Apparently the local Little League compartmentalized so that it could justify the sponsorship and ignore the idiocy of having minors promote alcohol consumption.

We show our faith by our works. If faith is compartmentalized so that it has no practical expression in our daily lives, then it is worthless. It is dead (Jas. 2:14-26). Don't bury your faith. Don't be intimidated by those who want to limit expressions of faith to church buildings. Let your light shine (Matt. 5:14-16).

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GLORY to the READER or the WRITER?

By **DAVID DIESTELKAMP**

The fruit fly has long been the mainstay of biomedical research. An article in the April 3, 2000 *Newsweek* lauds the scientific breakthrough of reading "almost all of the chemical letters—165 million of them—that make up its DNA." It is called "an impressive technical feat in its own right."

My marvel at the technological accomplishments of man falls far short of my awe for the One who took nothing and made all that man is discovering. The science of man is simply reading what God has written. And we are still in the primary reader stage at that—humans have almost 20 times more DNA than fruit flies!

"I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well" (Psa. 139:14).

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Why Do You Think They Call Them 'Shorts'?

By KARL DIESTELKAMP

Warm weather is here again and already the public "peel" has taken place as men, women and children go about scantily clad. Every year some Christians seem determined to debate the issue of "what is modest?" seemingly hoping that God's word may have changed somehow. I don't want to

COMFORT, EASE
& FASHION
vs. MODESTY

sound unkind or impatient, but it gets discouraging to have to go over the same ground every year with essentially the same people who almost never come with an affirmative argument to defend clothing that does not cover the body.

No one disputes that 1 Tim. 2:9 mandates "modest apparel" and that the "adorning" under consideration is to be "with shamefastness and sobriety" (ASV). Shamefastness is "with a sense of shame" and sobriety is "sound judgment." What is so hard about that for someone who wants to practice things that are absolutely right and cannot be wrong?

No one disputes that Matt. 5:28 teaches that "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust

after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Some will say that this is the man's problem in such a case. Certainly he has an obligation to control his eyes and his thoughts. But what Christian, would want to dress in such a way to encourage such lustful "looking" by anyone?

After we have discussed the near nude environment of the public beach and mixed swimming, the lustful appeal of too tight, too low, too short, and too revealing clothing, someone invariably asks, "But, what about shorts?" After all of that, my answer is, "Why do you think they call them shorts?" Is there a "clue" somewhere in that word? Are shorts "revealing" to others or not? Now someone says, "But what about long shorts?" If they are "long" why are they "shorts?" Maybe words don't mean anything any more!

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'Skin Is In'

By DAVID DIESTELKAMP

Advertising this spring and summer's bare fashions, a popular magazine's cover reads, "Skin is In!" Of course, public exposure of skin has always been "in" with some, but it has rarely been so socially acceptable. Bare and revealing styles have, in fact, now become expected. Today, social pressures are compounded by the difficulty of finding decent clothes in the stores.

Are we thinking? Most people act as though they are not thinking about decency. Maybe this is to be expected of the world, but even some Christians act like God doesn't care what we wear. Have we forgotten that Jesus is Lord both of our bodies and how we clothe them? God has spoken, "...women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation...., but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works" (1 Tim. 2:9-11). Is this the foundation of our thinking while shopping for our wardrobe and getting dressed in the morning?

Are we searching? I am well aware of the fact that some Christians struggle with the above verse in determining exactly what is modest. Unfortunately, the question "Where do you draw the line" has turned into a worn out excuse for having no objective line at all. This question should drive us, hungry and thirsting (Matt. 5:6), into a daily search of the Scriptures to find out what is right (Ac. 17:11). In all other areas we say, "Stand still—don't act—until you know you can do so in full faith that it is right!" How can we allow ourselves to wear clothing that we are not 100% sure is modest?

What is our standard? *Everyone* has a "line"—a point of propriety and decency for at least *some* situations. The world derives its clothing standards from things like what feels good (pleasure, comfort, sexual appeal, etc.), what looks good (style, attractiveness, etc.), and popularity (fashion, fad, etc.). Note that these are based in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. John warns us that this "...is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 Jn. 2:16-17). As Christians, we are looking to a much higher rule. It is God and His Word which are our standard in *all* things. Does what we wear appeal to the standards of God or men? Stop wearing it if it cannot be justified by God's Word!

It is disturbing that many Christians act as though we need authority for everything we do, *except* for what we wear. They reject lessons on modesty and propriety, as well as suggested biblical "lines," but then offer *nothing* as a substitute standard. The rejection of an interpretation or proposed standard does not free someone to act lawlessly—it *obligates* them to find the truth!

What do our clothes say? We are speaking to God, not just men, by what we wear. Do our *clothes* say that we are "professing godliness, with good works"? Of course we won't always be dressed like everyone else—they aren't professing the same thing we are! In fact, we are going to stand out "...in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15).

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WHERE *is the* GLORY?

By KARL DIESTELKAMP

Am I the only one who has noticed the growing number of women who have cut their hair very, very short? In the world it is commonplace to see a couple where the man has a closely cut, masculine haircut and the woman has an equally short, or shorter, haircut. We can expect that the world.

The alarming thing is that more and more of our sisters in Christ are resorting to very short and often mannish haircuts. 1 Cor. 11:15 says, "...if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her..." The previous verse says, "...if a man have long hair, it is a shame [dishonor] unto him." The evidence is not arrived at in the measuring, it is in what is readily visible. Some men leave the barber shop with their shame intact, while some women exit the beauty shop leaving their glory on the "cutting room" floor. Is there no reason for concern? Shall we disregard scripture? Would anyone go so far as to say the inspired apostle did not know what he was saying?

Yes, I have heard the reasoning—"It's so much easier to take care of"... "It's the latest style"... "It's 'cute'"... "Older women don't look good in long hair"... "Long hair is hot"... "How long is long?" etc., etc. But, sister, is your hair a glory to you?

Submitting To The Lord

By **ANDY DIESTELKAMP**

What is a lord? A lord is one who has power and authority over others. Lord is sometimes used as a title for people in positions of power. In the government of England there is the House of Lords. We use lord in conjunction with the authority that comes with ownership. We call them landlords. It is not unusual to hear the word lord in religious circles, but what do people mean when they use that word? People will talk about serving the Lord, putting the Lord first, and making Jesus Lord of their lives, but what does all this mean? Sometimes religious jargon loses its meaning because it is spoken so often by so many without an understanding of the meaning.

God is Lord. Jesus refers to the Father as Lord of heaven and earth (Lk. 10:21). This makes sense if we understand God to be the creator of all. He made it all. He owns it all. He is Lord of all. The Apostle Paul refers to Him as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:13-16). Lord means that He has authority. Lord of all means that He has all authority. To possess all authority is the mark of deity.

Interestingly, this title is also used of Jesus. The Apostle Peter understood and taught that Jesus is Lord of all (Ac. 10:34-36). The Apostle John reveals Jesus wears the same title as His Father (Rev. 17:14; 19:11-16). Jesus is Lord! He is Lord of all. He bears the mark of deity. No wonder the apostle Thomas, upon seeing the resurrected Jesus, said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" (Jn. 20:24-29).

Whose Lord is Jesus? People will often talk about the need for you to make Jesus

Lord of your life. Friend, Jesus *is* Lord of your life! Our acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord no more makes Him Lord than our confession of Him as the Son of God makes Him the Son of God. Jesus is Lord of lords whether or not we confess that. Paul writes that God exalted Jesus that at his name every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord (Phil. 2:9-11). He is our Lord whether or not we'll admit it, but we will admit it, if not now, before the judgment seat of God (Rom. 14:9-12).

Is Jesus your Lord? The answer is yes. The question is, will you submit to Jesus as Lord? Only you can answer that. Jesus said that most would reject the way of righteousness (Matt. 7:13,14). However, there will even be many who claim Jesus as Lord who will then be rejected by Him. "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matt. 7:22,23). Why? Because not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of God (Matt. 7:21).

To confess Jesus as Lord is not merely to utter the words, but to submit to the will of the Lord. To practice that which is against the law of the Lord is to fail to do His will. This gives greater meaning to Jesus' charge, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth [That sounds like a Lord]. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, [How?] baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all

things that I have commanded you..." (Matt. 28:18-20). A disciple of Jesus is therefore one who has been taught to observe all that Jesus commanded. A disciple is one who has been baptized. A disciple is one who submits to Jesus as Lord.

Jesus is your Lord. Have you submitted to His lordship?

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