

HOW TO BEHAVE IN THE HOUSE OF GOD, 1 TIM. 3:15

INTRODUCTION:

SINCE SO MUCH IS WRITTEN THESE DAYS ABOUT CHILD BEHAVIOR, IT SHOULD NOT SEEM STRANGE TO US TO LEARN THAT THE BIBLE HAS SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THE BEHAVIOR OF GOD'S CHILDREN IN HIS HOUSE. GOD DOES HAVE STANDARDS OF PROPER CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR — NOT LIKE THE HOME WHERE AS SOMEONE HAS SAID, "EVERYTHING IS CONTROLLED BY A SWITCH EXCEPT THE CHILDREN!" PAUL WROTE TO TIMOTHY, "I AM WRITING THESE INSTRUCTIONS TO YOU SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW HOW ONE OUGHT TO BEHAVE IN THE HOUSE OF GOD."

THERE IS A MODERN PHILOSOPHY WHICH IS CALLED BY THE NAME "BEHAVIORISM". IT TEACHES THAT ALL CONDUCT IS BASED ON THE MUSCLES AND GLANDS OF THE BODY. THEY ATTEMPT TO GET RID OF THE SOUL LIKE THE LITTLE CHILD TRIES TO GET RID OF ITS SHADOW. IT CAN BE DONE ONLY BY GOING INTO THE DARK. BEHAVIORISTS SAY THAT ONE SHOULD DO ANYTHING HE WANTS TO DO, THAT WE NEED NO EXTERNAL MORAL STANDARD TO GOVERN OUR CONDUCT. I BELIEVE GOD'S WORD FURNISHES US WITH AN AUTHORITATIVE STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR.

1. THE FIRST POINT OF THE CHRISTIAN'S BEHAVIOR ON THE HOUSE OF GOD IS: ATTEND REGULARLY.

A WEAK CHRISTIAN WAKES UP ON SUNDAY MORNING AND SAYS, "I HAVE A LITTLE HEADACHE; I DON'T THINK I'LL GO TO CHURCH TODAY! BUT GOD'S WORD SAYS, "FORSAKE NOT THE ASSEMBLING OF YOURSELVES TOGETHER."

IF SOME PROFESSING CHRISTIANS WERE AS IRREGULAR IN GOING TO THEIR SECULAR EMPLOYMENT AS THEY ARE ABOUT THEIR RELIGIOUS EMPLOYMENT THEY WOULD BE OUT OF A JOB SO QUICK IT WOULD MAKE THEIR HEAD SWIM.

IF SOME CHRISTIANS WERE AS IRREGULAR ABOUT FEEDING THEIR PHYSICAL BODY AS THEY ARE ABOUT FEEDING THEIR SOUL THEY WOULD STARVE TO DEATH JUST AS CERTAIN AS THEIR PUNY SOUL IS WITHERING AWAY WITH SPIRITUAL ANEMIA.

THIS IS WHY OUR CHURCHES AREN'T BURNING THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN AS DID THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IF ALL PROFESSING CHRISTIANS WERE AS LOYAL TO THE LORD AS THEY ARE TO THEIR LODGE OR CIVIC CLUB, AND AS INTERESTED IN MAKING DISCIPLES AS THEY ARE IN MAKING \$\$\$, AND AS STIRRED UP ABOUT RELIGION AS THEY ARE ABOUT POLITICS, THE CHURCH COULD CAPTURE CONTINENTS INSTEAD OF CORNERS FOR CHRIST.

BRETHREN, YOU CAN'T BE LOYAL TO CHRIST AND DISLOYAL TO THE CHURCH AT THE SAME TIME. AND ONE'S LIP LOYALTY TO THE CHURCH IS BELIED BY CONSISTENT, INEXCUSABLE ABSENCE FROM THE CHURCH SERVICES, INCLUDING NOT ONLY SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP, BUT ALSO SUNDAY SCHOOL, TRAINING UNION, EVENING SERVICE, MID-WEEK PRAYER SERVICE, AND BROTHERHOOD OR W.M.S. WHENEVER POSSIBLE. THESE SERVICES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND ACTIVITIES ARE PROVIDED FOR YOUR PERSONAL SPIRITUAL WELFARE, AND TO GIVE YOU AN AVENUE TO BE A BLESSING TO YOUR CHURCH, COMMUNITY, AND TO WORLD MISSIONS.

ANOTHER THING — ATTEND CHURCH REGULARLY, AND BE ON TIME FOR THE PRELUDE, AND STAY UNTIL THE POSTLUDE. (ONE PRESENT DAY PASTOR HAS SPKEN OF THE "POST-DOXOLOGISTS" AND THE "PRE-BENEDICTIONISTS" IN HIS CHURCH!)

II. AND WHEN YOU COME, WORSHIP REVERENTLY.

A. BEFORE I SAY ANY MORE ABOUT THIS MATTER OF WORSHIP, MAY I SAY TO YOU UNSAVED FRIENDS, YOU CANNOT REALLY WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH UNTIL YOU ARE RELATED TO HIM AS HIS CHILD BY FAITH AND HE IS YOUR SAVIOR AND FATHER. BEFORE YOUR WORSHIP IS ACCEPTABLE TO HIM YOU MUST ACCEPT HIS SALVATION.

REMEMBER THE DIFFERENT OFFERINGS AND WORSHIP OF CAIN & ABEL

B. BE QUIET, ATTENTIVE, AND SERIOUS.

C. DR. JOHNSON, WHILE STANDING IN THE DESERTED WALLS OF A RUINED CHAPEL, REMOVED HIS HAT, AND SAID, "I LOOK WITH REVERENCE UPON EVERY PLACE THAT HAS BEEN SET APART FOR RELIGION."

D. THE CRYING SIN OF OUR DAY IS IRREVERENCE.

E. THE ONLY TIME WHEN JESUS WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN ANGRY WAS WHEN HE SAW HIS FATHER'S HOUSE PROFANED.

F. THERE IS SOMETHING WONDERFUL ABOUT UNITED CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP. I LIKE TO SEE EVERYONE IN THE AUDIENCE JOIN IN THE SINGING AND WORSHIP. WHAT WOULD WE THINK IF ONLY A SINGLE BIRD SHOULD CELEBRATE THE DAWN WITH HIS LONE FEEBLE NOTE?

IT IS WHEN THE AIR IS FILLED WITH MELODIOUS VOICES, WHEN FROM EVERY BUSH AND TREE TOP, THROUGH ALL THE FIELDS AND GROVES, AND THERE IS UNANIMOUS MINGLING OF CHEERFUL PRAISE, THAT THE RESPONSES OF THE BIRDS ARE WORTHY OF THE MORNING. AND SURELY THE CHURCH SERVICE CALLS FOR A SPONTANEOUS UTTERANCE FROM ALL THE WORSHIPERS.

III. HOW ELSE SHOULD WE BEHAVE IN THE HOUSE OF GOD?

WE SHOULD PRAY EARNESTLY. 2:18

THE POET SAID, "PRAYER IS THE SOUL'S SINCERE DESIRE, UTTERED OR UNEXPRESSED."

ALL TOO OFTEN, HOWEVER, IT IS UNEXPRESSED RATHER THAN UTTERED. JESUS SAID PRAYER IS ASKING, SEEKING, KNOCKING. WHATEVER ELSE IT MIGHT BE, IT IS ACTIVE FAITH RATHER THAN PASSIVE PIETY.

PAUL SAID, (T:1,8) "I URGE THAT SUPPLICATIONS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSIONS, AND THANKSGIVINGS BE MADE FOR ALL MEN," AND "I DESIRE THAT IN EVERY PLACE MEN SHOULD PRAY."

HOW WE CHURCH MEMBERS SHUN PRAYER.

WE PRAY, WORK, AND SLAVE AT OUR PET PROJECTS RATHER THAN WAIT ON GOD IN PRAYER. CHRISTIANS WHO ARE REGULAR CHATTERBOXES IN SOCIAL MEETINGS ARE AS CLOSE-MOUTHED AS A CLAM IN A PRAYER MEETING.

Men ought always to pray. That duty is as clearly defined as a path of tar across a field of snow. Be instant in prayer in season and out of season.

E.M. BOUNDS SAYS IN HIS BOOK POWER THROUGH PRAYER, "Men, not machinery, are God's methods. God does not work through organization, plans, or programs, but through men, men of prayer."

IV. CERTAINLY IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD WE MUST LIVE CONSISTENTLY.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "HOUSE" MEANS ALSO "HOUSEHOLD."

THEN THIS TEXT REFERS NOT ONLY TO THE CHURCH BUILDING BUT TO ALL OUR RELATIONSHIPS AS CHRISTIANS —
— THUS EMBRACING OUR WHOLE LIVES.

CHRISTIANITY IS NOTHING IF IT IS NOT PRACTICAL.

IT SHOULD VITALLY AFFECT EVERYTHING IN OUR PRACTICAL, DAILY LIFE. PAUL WRITES MUCH IN THESE PASTORAL EPISTLES TO TIMOTHY AND TITUS ABOUT PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY IN THE PERSONAL LIFE.

"How little it costs to be a church member...."

Be an example - 4:12; 1:5; 4:16

(PAUL)

HE OUTLINES DETAILED QUALIFICATIONS FOR PASTORS AND DEACONS. HE SPEAKS PERSONALLY TO THE ELDERLY CHRISTIANS, TO WIDOWS, MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY, (SLAVES AND MASTERS) THE RICH AND POOR. HE SPEAKS OF YOUTHFUL PASSIONS, OF STUPID CONTROVERSIES, DISSENTIONS, AND QUARRELS. HE MAKES IT PLAIN THAT CHRISTIANITY IS NOT A CLOAK WHICH YOU CAN PUT ON ON SUNDAY AND TAKE OFF ON MONDAY.

WE NEED CHRISTIANS WHO WILL MEASURE 16 OUNCES TO THE POUND, 36 INCHES TO THE YARD, 100% FOR GOD. DO YOU REALLY LIVE FOR XT? IS YOUR TONGUE SHARP, CRITICAL, AND UNKIND, OR HAS IT BEEN CONVERTED?

ARE YOUR BUSINESS METHODS UNFAIR, UNJUST, AND UNCHRISTIAN, OR HAVE THEY BEEN CONVERTED?

ARE YOUR TALENTS AND ABILITIES WASTED AND HIDDEN, OR HAVE THEY BEEN INVESTED IN THE SERVICE OF GOD?

ARE YOUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES HEAPING UP TREASURES ON EARTH OR LAYING UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN?

IS YOUR LIFE JUST AS CLEAN AND PURE IN SECRET AS IT SEEMS TO BE IN PUBLIC?

V. HOW ELSE MUST WE BEHAVE IN THE HOUSE OF GOD?

WE MUST TEACH FAITHFULLY.

Beloved, we have something worth teaching.

Heb. 5:12

THIS PRECIOUS HERITAGE HAS BEEN PURCHASED WITH THE BLOOD OF GOD'S MARTYRS DOWN THROUGH THE CENTURIES. EVEN THROUGH THE DARKEST YEARS OF THE MIDDLE AGES THERE WERE THOSE WHO BELIEVED THE BLESSED BOOK AND REFUSED TO BOW THE KNEE TO THE POPISH BAAL. AND FOR THIS THEY WERE SLAUGHTERED BY THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS MANY DYING LIKE JEROME OF PRAGUE, WHO WAS BURNED AT THE STAKE WITH JOHN HUSS, SINGING "THIS SOUL OF MINE IN FLAMES OF FIRE, O CHRIST, I OFFER THEE!"

WITHOUT THE TEACHING OF GOD'S GRACIOUS TRUTH WE ARE BAFFLED BY THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HISTORY:

"CARELESS SEEMS THE GREAT AVENGER; HISTORY'S PAGES BUT RECORD ONE DEATH GRAPPLE IN THE DARKNESS 'TWIXT OLD SYSTEMS AND THE WORD TRUTH, FOREVER ON THE SCAFFOLD; WRONG FOREVER ON THE THRONE— YET THAT SCAFFOLD SWAYS THE FUTURE,

AND BEHIND THE DIM UNKNOWN STANDETH GOD WITHIN THE SHADOW,

KEEPING WATCH ABOVE HIS OWN."

"THEN TO SIDE WITH TRUTH IS NOBLE, WHEN WE SHARE HER WRETCHED CRUST,

ERE HER CAUSE BRING FAME AND PROFIT,

AND 'TIS PROSPEROUS TO BE JUST;

THEN IT IS THE BRAVE MAN CHOOSES,

WHILE THE COWARD STANDS ASIDE,

DOUBTING IN HIS ABJECT SPIRIT,

TIL HIS LORD IS CRUCIFIED,

AND THE MULTITUDE MAKES VIRTUE OR

OF THE FAITH THEY HAD DENIED." — J.R. LOWELL

OUR TEXT TELLS US THAT THE CHURCH IS THE PILLAR AND BULWARK

OF TRUTH. — WHAT TRUTH???

THE TRUTH OF AN INSPIRED BOOK, NOT A HUMAN BOOK.

THE TRUTH OF A SUPERNATURAL REVELATION, NOT A NATURAL DISCOVERY.

" FREE GRACE, NOT SACRAMENTAL GRACE.

" THE PRIESTHOOD OF EVERY BELIEVER,

NOT THE PRIESTHOOD OF A PRIVILEGED CLASS.

2 Tim. 4:24

AWAY WITH MUSTY MEDIEVALISM AND SILLY SENTIMENTALISM,
AND LET'S GO BACK TO THE BIBLE!

someone has rightly said that today faith's wings have been
clipped by reason's sissors, and we are plagued by an
intellectual skepticism that goes nowhere so fast

IT ARRIVES OUT OF BREATH!

CHRIST SAID, "I AM THE TRUTH." GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH.

WE HAVE THE TRUTH: LET'S TEACH IT FAITHFULLY!

PAUL WROTE, "COMMAND AND TEACH THESE THINGS."

"ALL SCRIPTURE IS INSPIRED BY GOD AND IS PROFITABLE FOR TEACHING"
HE ALSO SAID, "THE TIME IS COMING WHEN PEOPLE WILL NOT ENDURE
SOUND TEACHING, BUT HAVING ITCHING EARS, THEY WILL ACCUMULATE
FOR THEMSELVES TEACHERS TO SUIT THEIR OWN LIKINGS, AND (2 Tim. 4:3)
WILL TURN AWAY FROM LISTENING TO THE TRUTH AND WANDER INTO MYTHS!"

HOW WE NEED TEACHERS WHO WILL FAITHFULLY TEACH SOUND DOCTRINE
Teaching presupposes study (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:14-17) (TITUS 2:1)

VI. HOW ELSE SHALL WE BEHAVE IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD.

WE MUST SERVE HUMBLY. Heb. language of Action.

EACH MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST HAS ITS FUNCTION TO PERFORM.
(1 Cor. 12:14-26). THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE BODY, SUCH AS
THE FOOT, HAND, EAR, AND EYE, ARE INDESPENSABLE TO EACH OTHER
AND TO THE WHOLE.

THERE SHOULD BE NO DISCORD IN THE BODY.

IF ONE MEMBER SUFFERS, ALL SUFFER TOGETHER.

IF ONE MEMBER IS HONORED, ALL REJOICE TOGETHER.

"MUST I BE CARRIED TO THE SKIES ON FLOWERY BEDS OF EASE
WHILE OTHERS FIGHT TO WIN THE PRIZE & SAIL THROUGH BLOODY SEAS?

MUST JESUS BEAR THE CROSS ALONE AND ALL THE WORLD GO FREE?

NO, THERE'S A CROSS FOR EVERYONE, AND THERE'S A CROSS FOR ME!

"THEREFORE, MY BELOVED BRETHREN, BE STERFAST,
IMMOVABLE, ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD,
KNOWING THAT YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD."

VII. FINALLY, AS TO HOW TO BEHAVE IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD,
I SAY WE MUST WATCH EAGERLY FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST.

THIS HAS EVER BEEN THE BLESSED HOPE OF THE CHURCH SINCE
JESUS SAID, "IF I GO AWAY I WILL COME AGAIN UNTO YOU", AND
SINCE THE AGED JOHN STOOD ON THE ROCKY ISLE OF PATMOS AND
SQUINTED WITH DIM EYES THROUGH THE FLEECY CLOUDS AND BLUE SKIES
OVER THE AEGEAN SEA AND PRAYED "EVEN SO COME, LORD JESUS."

THIS IS A PURIFYING HOPE, AS JOHN WROTE, "EVERYONE THAT HATH
THIS HOPE IN HIM PURIFIETH HIMSELF, EVEN AS HE IS PURE."
YOU CAN'T LIVE AN IMPURE LIFE AND EXPECT TO STAND AT ANY MOMENT
BESTORE THE SPOTLESS SON OF GOD. IF YOU BELIEVE IN AND EXPECT
THE IMMINENT COMING OF CHRIST, YOUR NATURAL CONCLUSION WILL BE
AS PETER'S WAS AFTER HE HAD BEEN WRITING ABOUT THE SECOND COMING
OF CHRIST: WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT YE TO BE IN ALL HOLY
CONVERSATION AND GODLINESS?"

2 Tim. 4:8 - Lore His appearing
1 Tim. 6:14 - until the appearing of our Lord

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