

# CHURCHIANITY OR CHRISTIANITY : WHICH DO YOU PRACTICE? : PART 1

Copyright 1994 - 2023 Bill's Bible Basics

Published On : April 2, 2000

Last Updated : September 28, 2023

The Church Dilemma Of A Christian Friend, Why I Dropped Out Of Organized Religion, Spiritual Babes Or Mature Leaders, Origin Of Church Buildings, Nature Of True Church, Our Body Is A Living Temple, Christ Within Us, The Cause Of Stephen's Martyrdom, Destruction Of The Temple, God Does Not Require A Physical Building, Jesus Christ The True Rock, Worship In The Spirit, Being Led By The Spirit, God's Word Will Accomplish God's Will, Confronting Church-Bred Christians With The Truth, God's Word Or Traditions Of Men, Freed By The Spirit Of Truth, Find God's Will Through Submission, Stand On Your Convictions

A number of years ago, a member of my now-defunct Christian mailing list called "Endtime Discuss Group Exchange" -- or EDGE -- wrote to me regarding a problem she was having in her personal life. This problem concerned the goings-on at her local church. Allow me to share her words with you, in order to help you to fully understand her dilemma. She wrote as follows:

----- Begin Quote -----

I was wondering if you could give me some advice? I can't stand it anymore going to our church because of the present pastor. Since we started there, 3/4 of the people have left because of him. [My husband] is so blind to see what this pastor has done and all the people he has hurt. [My husband] said I could go somewhere else. What I was wondering is, if I would be out of God's will, us going in different directions? I know the Lord looks at a married couple as one spirit joined together. I need to be concerned about my own salvation, and work it out everyday with the Lord's help. I was wondering what your thoughts were?

----- End Of Quote -----

Being an avid reader of my writings, as well as a longtime

member of my mailing list, this woman was already aware of my personal feelings regarding the modern church system, or churchianity, as I prefer to call it. Like other people who form a part of our online fellowship, for many years now -- decades in fact -- I have chosen to simply not participate in organized religion to any degree.

I made this decision based on a variety of factors, including the great deal of hypocrisy; rampant materialism; the lack of teaching sound, Bible-based doctrine; the serious, ongoing compromise with the spirit, ideas, beliefs and practices of the world; the man worship and the favoritism; etc. I explain my position in more detail in some of my other articles which you can find on the Bill's Bible Basics website. Thus I will not belabor the point here. In short, I can truly relate to how this woman was feeling.

Based upon what I know about this particular couple, I am not certain if they are really ready yet to make this same kind of break with churchianity as I and others have done. While the wife may be ready, being as she has mentioned this same issue to me before, I have some reservations regarding her husband. His hesitancy to leave their current church is readily reflected in the above message; assuming of course that her description of his current attitude is accurate.

On the other hand, if I am incorrect, and they both are ready to "cut the apron strings", as we say in American slang, then my suggestion to them would be to try to start their own fellowship, in their own home, with like-minded Believers. I believe that I may have suggested this same possibility to them on a previous occasion as well.

Because of what this woman has shared with me regarding their activities in their current church, I do not view this couple as being spiritual babes. That being the case, some of the articles I have written concerning the subject of spiritual growth -- such as "Are You Just a Baby Huey?" -- definitely apply to them. In other words, given their age, and likewise considering their amount of personal experience in the church system, it seems to me that this couple should now possess sufficient knowledge and wisdom -- not to mention at least a basic understanding of God's Word -- to know how to establish and lead their own flock; or at least how to organize a loose association of fellow Believers who get together on weekends for fellowship and reading God's Word.

Having said that, I offer some helpful guidelines in the "Baby Huey" article, as well as in the series entitled "Where Are the First Century Churches?". In other words, there comes a time when we Christians must stop being spiritual babes. We need to mature in the Spirit, and we need to become leaders and fruit-bearing branches in the Lord's Church. I will be sharing more concerning this topic later on in this series.

As I point out in the aforementioned article, as well as in a number of other articles, the first thing that they -- and many other Christians -- need to realize, is that one does not need to attend a church building in order to "find" God, or to fellowship with the Lord. Why do I say this? Because a church building in itself is not the true house of God. As I have stated a number of times before, Jesus quite plainly taught His first Disciples the following truth:

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Matthew 18:20, KJV

As you can plainly see, nowhere in that verse does the Lord say that such gatherings have to specifically occur in a church building. In fact, as many of you will already know, church buildings did not even exist at the time that Jesus said that. After all, the Lord had barely begun to build His spiritual Church at that point in history. This development would not begin to occur in earnest until fifty days after the Lord was hung on a Roman cross during the feast of the Passover, when the Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. It is at that point that we're told the following in the Book of Acts:

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And THE LORD ADDED TO THE CHURCH DAILY SUCH AS SHOULD BE SAVED."

Acts 2:46-47, KJV

The fact of the matter is that church buildings were actually a man-made invention which was contrived some three centuries after the Crucifixion of Christ. This occurred when our faith became a legal, approved religion -- or "religio licita" -- which was recognized by the Roman Empire. However, for this to happen, its radical doctrines had to be toned down. Thus, it became polluted, corrupted, perverted, and weakened, by

those individuals -- that is, the early 4th Century bishops who conspired with Emperor Constantine I -- who, sadly, no longer possessed the same moral and spiritual convictions as the original Apostles. As a result, it was then that they got into building churches. I discuss these details in other articles which you will find listed at the end of this same series.

The point is, our gathering together can occur absolutely anywhere, and at any time. Over and over again I have told my readers that God is where we are, because our body is the true temple of the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit of Christ dwells within each one of us when we accept Him as our Lord and Savior. This is precisely what the Scriptures teach us, as we can easily confirm by the following group of verses:

"Know ye not that YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLETH IN YOU? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, WHICH TEMPLE YE ARE."  
1 Corinthians 3:16-17, KJV

"What? know ye not that YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."  
1 Corinthians 6:19-20, KJV

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."  
2 Corinthians 6:16, KJV

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELL IN YOU. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead DWELL IN YOU, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies BY HIS SPIRIT THAT DWELLETH IN YOU."  
Romans 8:9-11, KJV

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches

of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; THAT CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS BY FAITH; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, THAT YE MIGHT BE FILLED WITH ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD."

Ephesians 3:14-19, KJV

"Let the WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Colossians 3:16, KJV

Whether we are discussing Christ the Living Word, or Christ the Written Word, both must dwell within us, and not in a cold, stone building, because they are basically synonymous terms. In the Gospel of John, the Apostle wrote, and Jesus Himself said, the following:

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

John 1:14, KJV

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

John 6:63, KJV

As you may know, it was in fact because the martyr Stephen said the very same thing in the seventh chapter of the Book of Acts, that the Jewish religious leaders stoned him to death. In so many words, Stephen said, "You don't need to go to the temple to worship anymore, because you are each now a part of God's living temple, and His Spirit dwells within you". Consider some of Stephen's final words which he spoke right before the demon-possessed Jews stopped their ears, and brought this faithful witness's life to a bloody end:

"But Solomon built him an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things? Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do

always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

Acts 7:47-51, KJV

In reading the Book of Acts, we discover that ten chapters later, the Apostle Paul conveyed this very same message to the Athenians as he stood in the midst of Mars' Hill, as we can confirm by the following verse:

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;"

Acts 17:24, KJV

Just like many hard-hearted Christian leaders and deceived sheep today, the Jews simply did not want to hear the truth. They didn't want to be told that their glorious temple compound -- which had been renovated and expanded by King Herod the Great himself -- and their cold, formal, mechanical religious worship, had become outdated, useless, spiritless, and was no longer even pleasing to the Lord.

In fact, after they crucified our Lord and Savior, the temple in Jerusalem became even more of an abomination in God's holy sight. As I explain in such articles as "Once Upon a Time: A True Story", not only was the temple veil torn in half, as a symbol of God's displeasure, and as a sign of the beginning of the New Covenant, or New Testament between God and man by the Blood of Jesus Christ, but as I explain in more detail in other articles, the temple itself was destroyed down to its very foundation stones, in 70 AD by General Titus -- the son of Emperor Vespasian -- in direct fulfillment of Jesus' own words, which He spoke at the beginning of Matthew chapter twenty-four, as we see here:

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Matthew 24:1-2, KJV

None of this should really come as a surprise to us, because since the time of King David, God had been conveying to the Israelites that He didn't need or require a physical building in which to dwell. This truth becomes plainly evident in the following group of verses:

"And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel, spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?"

2 Samuel 7:4-7, KJV

"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"

1 Kings 8:27, KJV

"Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?"

Isaiah 66:1, KJV

"Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these."

Jeremiah 7:4, KJV

"For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof."

Hosea 8:14, KJV

Do you see that? The Israelites forgot God when they began to build buildings! What does that say for modern Christians who engage in lavish church construction projects which cost millions of dollars? Is the churchianity system guilty of the very same thing? Need I really answer this question?

It is because the Apostle Peter embraced this very same understanding regarding the nature of the true temple, and true worship, that he also clarified in his first Epistle, that Jesus Christ is the true Foundation Stone -- and not himself as the Roman Catholic Church likes to insist -- and that each one of us is symbolically a living stone in God's living Temple. After all, as Jesus said, the Spirit brings

life, and not death, as in a cold, dead, hollow building made of steel and concrete. Consider Peter's actual words:

"If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded."

1 Peter 2:3-6, KJV

If there is one thing of which I am certain, it is that God's true Holy Spirit is consistent in what it teaches us. It is not like the spirit of confusion which has filled modern Christianity with so many different false doctrines and odd manifestations. In his first Epistle to the Church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul not only prays for spiritual and doctrinal unity within the fledgling Church, but he also plainly states that God is not the author of confusion. Not only that, but in full agreement with what was taught by our Lord, by Peter, by Stephen and by others, Paul also informs us that Jesus Christ is the Spiritual Rock in our lives, the Foundation Stone; and that it is not the foundation stone of some physical church building. Please consider the following verses:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

1 Corinthians 1:10, KJV

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

1 Corinthians 14:33, KJV

"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

1 Corinthians 10:4, KJV

When Jesus was speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John, did He not say the following to her concerning true worship in the Spirit?:



". . . Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

John 4:21-24, KJV

Can the truth be any clearer than that? Jesus was plainly saying, "Look lady; the day is soon coming when you will no longer have to go to Jerusalem to worship in the temple, or to any other particular place, because God will require of all of you, true worship in the Spirit." You see, just like many other Israelites, she had been taught all her life that if a person failed to make a yearly pilgrimage to worship in the temple in Jerusalem -- and thus help to fill the temple coffers -- he or she must not be a very devout believer.

Sadly, this is precisely the same attitude which has been cultivated in millions of Christians today. Unless one goes to church, he or she must not be a very good Christian. In fact, he or she must not be one at all. At the very least, he or she is terribly backslidden from the faith. As I have already stated, when Stephen tried to reiterate this same message, it got him killed very quickly; just like it got Jesus killed really quickly; and many others who followed in His footsteps as well.

When I first read this woman's question, I realized how serious of a matter it was. As such, I dared not to take it lightly by just offering her a weak, fleshly answer that was based upon my human wisdom. So, I said a prayer, and I asked the Lord for His Wisdom and Spiritual Guidance. The previous Scriptural response is the result. As I have said many times before, I don't have all of the answers, and I don't pretend to have all of the answers. The only thing that I know how to do, is to draw upon my knowledge of God's Word, and trust that God's Spirit will bring the right Scriptures into my mind, in order to provide the right answer that people need to hear, and which will help them to discover the truth for themselves. This is what Jesus said would happen, so I have to simply trust that my answers are of Him. As Jesus said in the Gospel of John:

"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, KJV

"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, KJV

I am not a Prophet, and I have never claimed to be a Prophet. So, all I can do is share what I believe I've received from the Lord, and leave it at that. I must trust that the words that I share will speak to people's hearts -- at least the part that really applies to them and their personal situation -- and will accomplish God's purposes in their lives. As the Prophet Isaiah was inspired to write:

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Isaiah 55:10-11, KJV

As is my custom, in responding to this woman, I have not tried to mix in any kind of personal interpretation. All I have done is link verses together to show a common thread; a common belief which was shared by all of these First Century writers. It is obvious to me that Jesus, Matthew, Stephen, Peter, Paul, and all the rest were in complete agreement regarding what they viewed as the True Church. As I hope you can see, it most certainly was not -- and is not -- a cold, stone building down the street, where people just go through the motions of being Christians on the weekends.

Now, in spite of the fact that I have shared the straight Word of God, I daresay that if one were to take this message to his or her pastor, priest or minister, or to anyone else who is heavily involved in organized religion, that person would undoubtedly tell you that I have spoken a terrible lie, and that I have perverted and twisted the true meaning of the Scriptures.

But tell me. Have I? Or are such church leaders just afraid of losing their control over people's lives by having them exposed to the truth of God's Word? After all, that truth plainly tells them that they don't really need their priest or church system with its hierarchical control system. Let us not forget that the Jewish religious elders who killed Jesus were afraid of the very same thing. Now, please think about this. If God didn't require or need a temple thousands of years ago, why are so many people today convinced that He needs church buildings? There is no difference. Is there?

During the time of His earthly ministry, Jesus's message was not just about being freed from the pangs of both physical and spiritual death which result from sin. It was also about being freed from the bondage of man-made traditions, false practices and erroneous doctrines. It was about being freed from spiritual and doctrinal blindness, which often stifles one's spiritual growth. It is for this reason that during the early part of His ministry, we find Jesus saying such things as the following. Please note that in Luke, the Lord was in fact quoting from the Prophet Isaiah:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Luke 4:18-19, KJV

". . . If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free . . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

John 8:31-32, 36, KJV

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the

people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."

Isaiah 42:1-7, KJV

My friend, if you are one who feels trapped and dissatisfied within organized religion, let me tell you that God desires to set you free from the enslaving, spiritless control system within which you currently find yourself. However, in order for that to happen, you must be willing to take a step of faith. No one can do that for you. I can only share the truth of the Scriptures with you, but I cannot force you to believe it, or to accept it, or to live it. After all, as the Apostle Paul also wrote, we must each be convinced for our own selves. Consider the following set of verses:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Romans 12:1-2, KJV

". . . Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

Romans 14:5, KJV

In other words, before you can truly discover what God's Will is for your life, you must be willing to give up your own will, and what you want to do, or what you think you ought to do, and allow God to renew you, and to give you the mind of Christ. As I explain in articles such as "What Is God's Will for My Life?" and "So You Really Think You Are So Humble?", this means that you must have a totally humble spirit which is submitted to God; just as Jesus did. Once you are convinced of what God's Will is for your life, then as Paul states in the above verse, you need to stick to it, no matter what anyone says. You need to have conviction about your beliefs, because God will judge you by your own words and actions, and not by those of another, or by what they tell you to do, think or believe.

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

Written by Bill Kochman

wordweaver777@gmail.com

<https://www.billkochman.com>

<https://www.csnet.live>

CHURCHIANITY OR CHRISTIANITY : WHICH DO YOU PRACTICE? : PART 2

Copyright 1994 - 2023 Bill's Bible Basics

Published On : April 2, 2000

Last Updated : September 28, 2023

Christian Fellowship And Church In The Home, Megachurches And Congregations Of Strangers, Wrong Reasons For Going To Church, Shallow After-Church Chat, Menpleasers/Lip Service, Cold Handshakes And Pats On The Back, Brotherly Love, Love Of Many Shall Wax Cold, Home Fellowship And Kindred Spirits, Lack Of Fellowship And Condemnation, Control Freak Pastors, Filthy Lucre And Fleecing God's Sheep, A Life Blessed Of The Lord, Surviving Outside Of The Church System, God's Loners, Persecution Of God's Servants, The Apostle Paul's Confession

Continuing our discussion from part one, as I mentioned to you previously, if you were to share this message with your church's pastor, or with a church elder, or with one of his loyal underlings, I don't doubt that he would immediately accuse me of being some kind of misguided heretic. He might even tell you that I am instructing you to go against God's Word by breaking off fellowship. In the process of doing it, he would probably share the following Bible verse with you, because this is one of the favorite ones which they like to use in such cases, in order to keep you under their control:

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Hebrews 10:25, KJV

Now let us clarify some of my previous statements. Have I told the aforementioned woman to stop fellowshiping? No I

have not. What I have in fact plainly stated is that if she is not happy with the fellowship at the current church she attends because of the pastor there, then given their age, experience and long background in the church system, maybe it is time for this couple to exercise their own personal faith, spread their spiritual wings, and start their own home fellowship. So in essence, they are not breaking off fellowship with other Christians, they are simply starting a NEW fellowship; and quite frankly, there is absolutely nothing wrong with doing that.

As I point out in my series entitled "Where Are the First Century Churches?", this is the true organizational pattern of the First Century Church. The New Testament quite plainly informs us that the Church was actually found in the homes of the Believers, and that they fellowshiped from house to house. Allow me to again share with you some of the verses from that series. The truth is quite evident in them:

"As for Saul, he made havock of the church, ENTERING INTO EVERY HOUSE, and haling men and women committed them to prison."

Acts 8:3, KJV

"Likewise greet the church THAT IS IN THEIR HOUSE. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ."

Romans 16:5, KJV

"The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church THAT IS IN THEIR HOUSE."

1 Corinthians 16:19, KJV

"Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and THE CHURCH WHICH IS IN HIS HOUSE."

Colossians 4:15, KJV

"And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to THE CHURCH IN THY HOUSE:"

Philemon 1:2, KJV

"And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, AND FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE,"

Acts 20:20, KJV

When God's Word speaks plainly regarding a certain issue, as these verses do, I prefer to believe it. What about you? We are told that before his miraculous conversion, Saul, later to be known as Paul, went into the homes of the Believers, and dragged them off to prison, because that is where their fellowships were being held, and not in some huge building down the block. Unless you believe that all of these folks had extremely large homes, capable of holding hundreds, or even thousands of new converts, then these verses seem to indicate that First Century Christians engaged in small, home-based fellowships where everyone knew each other on a very personal level. There was a real, genuine, spiritual unity, intimacy and fellowship at work there.

Contrary to what is described in the previous verses, some modern churches have such huge congregations -- so-called "megachurches" with literally thousands of members -- that it is virtually impossible for everyone to know each other on a personal level; not that they would want to anyway. They've become cold, formal, spiritually-dead institutions; and in some instances, sins and problems cannot be properly addressed due to the sheer size of the congregation. That is, when the church leader is even willing to delve into such sensitive matters.

Sadly, nowadays, it seems that following the inspiration leader, and making a lot of noise, and having all kinds of strange manifestations, is more important than sharing and following God's Word, and keeping personal lives in order, and honorable before the Lord. But again, this is something I discuss in more detail in other articles for those of you who are interested.

Furthermore, in such large congregations, quite a few of the members are there, not because they really want to be there in their hearts, but simply because they have bowed to peer pressure, community pressure, political correctness, because mom and dad said they have to go, or because they got tired of the spouse nagging them all of the time. Some of them simply are not there for the right reasons, and would much prefer being at home sleeping in, or watching the football game, or going out with the buddies on that fishing trip. If you doubt my words, then listen to some of the conversations which are held immediately following the church service.

In many cases, after-church chat immediately turns to worldly themes, as if those involved want to try to quickly forget

any words of conviction which may have been spoken by the well-meaning church leader. They feel embarrassed by the pastor's words, so they try to simply ignore them by talking about other things which they do have in common. It is all so shallow and fake. They don't know how to communicate with each other on a deeper spiritual level, because they have no spiritual depth. Now tell me; is that really true fellowship of the Spirit? I think not. I am reminded once again of the Lord's sad description concerning his Jewish enemies. There are in fact a number of verses found in the Bible which aptly describe menpleasers and lip service. Consider the following:

"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:"

Isaiah 29:13, KJV

"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."

Matthew 15:7-8, KJV

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."

Matthew 23:1-3, KJV

"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

Mark 7:6, KJV

"For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

John 12:43, KJV

"Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:"

Ephesians 6:6-7, KJV

As you will probably know, in some churches, they have the customary greeting and handshake, where upon being cued by



the elder, everyone is supposed to turn to their neighbor in the pew, and greet them and give them a handshake. It is possible that this modern-day custom may have evolved from the original, heartfelt expressions of love which were made by the First Century Apostles and Disciples, as they were instructed to do by the Lord Himself. Consider this group of verses:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

John 13:34-35, KJV

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you . . . These things I command you, that ye love one another."

John 15:12, 17, KJV

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

Romans 13:8, KJV

"Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you."

Romans 16:16, KJV

"All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss."

1 Corinthians 16:20, KJV

"Greet one another with an holy kiss."

2 Corinthians 13:12, KJV

"But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."

1 Thessalonians 4:9, KJV

"Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss."

1 Thessalonians 5:26, KJV

"Let brotherly love continue."

Hebrews 13:1, KJV

"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:"

James 2:8, KJV

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:"

1 Peter 1:22, KJV

"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

1 Peter 4:8, KJV

"For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another . . . And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."

1 John 3:11, 23, KJV

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."

1 John 4:7, 11-12, KJV

"And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another."

2 John 1:5, KJV

Sadly, the heartfelt demonstration of brotherly affection which was shared by the Christian Disciples of the First Century has now devolved into a cold handshake, a pat on the back, and mumbling a few words to our neighbor in the pew, if even that. In the past -- decades ago -- I was involved in such behavior, and it was so mechanical and emotionless. Like a bunch of mindless robots, everyone would do as they were told, and then turn again to face the priest or pastor. As I point out in other articles, Jesus himself foresaw this happening, because not only do our sins separate us from God, but they separate us from each other as well; and one of the primary sins is the sin of pride. As Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew:

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

Returning to the couple which inspired this series, as I stated earlier, if they are not happy in their church, then perhaps they should consider establishing their own home fellowship with people with whom they feel a kindred spirit. Who knows; they might be pleasantly surprised to discover that some of the others who also left their church, might be interested in coming to their home -- or wherever it might be convenient -- in order to have some real fellowship in the Spirit. They can share the Word together, have prayer and counsel, perhaps share a potluck dinner, or do whatever the Lord leads them to do.

Now, suppose that rather than deciding to start their own fellowship, this couple chooses to look for another church where they feel comfortable, but it takes a while for them to find a good quality church where Bible-based doctrine is preached. What if, as a result of their prayerful search for a new church home, they are left out of fellowship for some time? Or suppose that they do choose to start their own home fellowship, but it takes some time for them to find other Christians who may be interested in attending, and who share their same vision? Should this couple feel condemned due to their lack of fellowship?

Well, if we accept the church system's mantra -- that is to say, the misguided mantra of organized religion, as well as the sermons of church preachers and pastors who are merely interested in packing people into their megachurches by the droves so that they can maintain their church coffers full -- then yes, this couple could indeed feel quite condemned. In fact, they might possibly be led to believe that God is going to strike them dead if they don't return to church as soon as possible! By the way, as I mention in "Exposing the Tactics of the Enemy", cults utilize the very same tactics!

Now, obviously, I realize that I'm being overly dramatic. But it is to emphasize a certain point; and that is that certain church leaders are experts when it comes to exerting control over their flocks, and making them feel like they are totally backslidden from the Lord if they fail to attend services for even a week or two. Some of these false shepherds simply do not like their members gaining any kind of spiritual freedom, or escaping from their grasp. They are total control freaks. Not only does it make a pastor look bad when members of the congregation start leaving the church in droves -- as seems

to be the case in this couple's church where three quarters of the original congregation has already left -- but as I said, it hurts them financially as well. And that is probably what raises their ire the most. The smaller their flock, the less sheep they have to fleece.

As I point out in articles such as "Money-Making Bible Hucksters and Mammon", as well as "Abundant Life Doctrine: Scripturally Exposed!", this practice of fleecing the sheep for personal gain -- or "filthy lucre" -- is nothing new. In fact, it has been going on for literally thousands of years. It was a very big problem in both the Old Testament, and the New Testament. Thus the Lord said the following through the Prophet Ezekiel:

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock . . . Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them."

Ezekiel 34:2-3, 7-10, KJV

In the New Testament, we also find the Apostles admonishing their followers to not teach and share God's Word for the sake of personal monetary gain -- or "filthy lucre" -- as we can determine by the following group of verses:

"Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous . . . Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, NOT GREEDY OF FILTHY LUCRE;"

1 Timothy 3:3, 8, KJV

"For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not

selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre . . . Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, FOR FILTHY LUCRE'S SAKE."

Titus 1:7, 11, KJV

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; NOT FOR FILTHY LUCRE, but of a ready mind;"

1 Peter 5:2, KJV

"And through COVETOUSNESS shall they WITH FEIGNED WORDS MAKE MERCHANDISE OF YOU: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

2 Peter 2:3, KJV

Of course, the reason why the Apostles taught this to their followers is because this is the very same example they had received, and the very same lesson they had learned, while watching and listening to Jesus himself, as is evident from the following set of verses

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for YE DEVOUR WIDOWS' HOUSES, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."

Matthew 23:14, KJV

"And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: WHICH DEVOUR WIDOWS' HOUSES, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation."

Mark 12:38-40, KJV

"Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; WHICH DEVOUR WIDOWS' HOUSES, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation."

Luke 20:46-47, KJV

"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of

thieves."

Matthew 21:12-13, KJV

"And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."

John 2:13-16, KJV

"And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Mark 11:15-17, KJV

Lord help us! What a powerful rebuke to modern-day preachers of the so-called "Prosperity Gospel" and the "Abundant Life" doctrine. They seem to be a scourge which has infected every continent on the planet. They make me sick! How about you?

As some of my longtime readers already know, I have not been a regular church member in more than fifty years. Based upon what is taught by some of the leaders of organized religion, I must be totally backslidden from the faith, and an absolute sinner of the worst kind. Oddly enough, I don't feel that way at all. In fact, while I live a rather simple life, with only my basic necessities being met, plus the tools that I need to carry on this ministry, in a spiritual sense, I feel that I have been greatly blessed by the Lord.

The honest truth of the matter is that not only has the Lord been faithful to provide my daily needs, but He has also provided me with a knowledge and understanding of His Word which I honestly don't believe I could have acquired, had I remained a part of organized religion. Why not? Well, because their entire objective seems to be to teach the Word of God from a perspective that will justify everything that they do; while at the same time condemning those people who do not go along with their program of control and indoctrination.

Another deception of churchianity and organized religion is the claim that a Christian simply cannot survive outside of the church system. The claim is that any attempt to do this will result in a Christian person growing weak spiritually, backsliding, and in a worse-case scenario, even leading to that person denying the Lord. Well, while that may be true with some people, it certainly has not been true in my life. I don't claim to be a spiritual giant of any kind. However, I do know what I believe, and why I believe it. Furthermore, my faith in the Lord and His Word is quite strong. I am not saying that I haven't made mistakes along the way; but when I do err, and if I do begin to stray from the Lord due to worldly enticements and other temptations, the conviction of God's Spirit is strong in my life, and I eventually get back on track again.

If we study the Bible closely, we discover that many of the Prophets and servants of the Lord were in fact loners who were rejected by the religious order of their day. They were social outcasts who were ridiculed, verbally warned, accused of committing treason, said to be liars, described as being crazy or demon-possessed, thrown into prison, tortured in a variety of ways, thrown out of town, and quite often killed, by the very ones who claimed to be the religion established by God. For example, Jesus and the Apostle Paul made it very clear that persecution would be the fate of Believers, as we see by the following group of verses:

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."

Matthew 24:9-10, KJV

"But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls."

Luke 21:12-19, KJV

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

John 15:18-21, KJV

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

John 16:2, KJV

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:"

2 Timothy 2:12, KJV

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

2 Timothy 3:12, KJV

"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."



In the previous verses, Jesus clearly states that the very ones who claim to be members of the religion of God, would persecute and kill the true followers of the Lord; thinking all the while that they were obeying the Lord by committing such heinous acts. The Apostle Paul -- who in former times was known as Saul of Tarsus -- was a classic example of this. Thus, in two of his Epistles, upon reflecting back on his former life as a devout, Law-bound Pharisee, he openly confesses his error. Consider the following set of verses:

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."

Acts 9:1-2, KJV

"And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished."

Acts 22:4-5, KJV

"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."

Acts 26:9-11, KJV

"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

1 Corinthians 15:9, KJV

"For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."

Galatians 1:13-14, KJV

Please go to part three for the continuation of this series.

Written by Bill Kochman

[wordweaver777@gmail.com](mailto:wordweaver777@gmail.com)

<https://www.billkochman.com>

<https://www.csnet.live>

CHURCHIANITY OR CHRISTIANITY : WHICH DO YOU PRACTICE? : PART 3

Copyright 1994 - 2023 Bill's Bible Basics

Published On : April 2, 2000

Last Updated : September 28, 2023

The Threat Of Home Fellowships, Methods That Religionists Use To Stamp Out Home Fellowships, Jewish Persecution Of Early Christian Church, Section 501(c)(3) And The Whorish Marriage Of Churchianity And The Worldly System, God Will Teach You And Empower You, Paul's View Of His Former Life As A Pharisee, Trust The Lord And Start Out Small, God Is Not Impressed With Numbers, Megachurches Versus Small Home Fellowships, Freely Use Bill's Bible Basics Study Materials, Rivers Of Living Water, Rely On God's Word And His Divine Inspiration, Importance Of Spiritual And Physical Unity In Marriage Relationships, Christian Wives Should Submit To Their Husbands, Honoring Your Husband's Decisions, When A Christian Couple Is Not In Agreement, Faith Patience And Trusting In The Lord While Awaiting The Outcome, A Solution Can Be Found Through United Prayer, Find God's Highest Will Together, Test: Love, Faith, Patience Respect And Humility

Continuing our discussion from part two, let me remind you that Satan does not change, and his tactics do not change. What he did in times past against the Lord's children, he continues to do today as well. That being the case, if you decide that you have the faith to start your own home fellowship, and if you are successful at it, do not be the least bit surprised if you are suddenly faced with some degree of opposition from your local church leaders who are

afraid that you might draw away members from their flocks. In their minds, you are a threat, plain and simple.

They will start to slander you in their Sunday sermons. They will inform their flocks that you are backslidden from the Lord, and warn them to stay away from you. They may even find ways to motivate the local authorities to move against you. In fact, in recent years, I've read a number of news reports where this has already begun to happen. No matter how quiet you may try to be, unsympathetic neighbors might complain to the authorities that you are making too much noise. I recall one report where a Christian couple who was holding Christian fellowships in their home was accused of parking violations, due to the number of cars that were parked in front of their house during an evening of fellowship. So my point is, they will find all kinds of technical reasons to try to prevent you from holding home fellowships. That is, church in the home.

What is so alarming about these incidents is the fact that they aren't happening in Russia, or in Communist China, or in some Muslim country where Christianity is prohibited by law. They are occurring in the so-called Christian United States of America! Think about that for a moment! As some of you will know, we have already seen a lot of discrimination and censorship against Christians on the social networks. Not only that, but even in the United States of America, there are instances where Christian street preachers are being thrown into jail. I can only imagine what the enemies of Christ will do next. This is a topic I discuss more at length in articles such as the series "Civil Disobedience and Christian Persecution".

The pompous, self-righteous Jewish religious leaders of two thousand years ago were also concerned with this very same issue. They viewed the fledgling Christian Church as a major threat to their false religious system, their hold on power, and the cozy relationship that they had with Rome. Thus it was that they not only eventually succeeded in killing Jesus by using the Romans as their pawns, but exactly as Jesus had predicted would happen, they also repeatedly warned the First Century Apostles to stop their preaching as well. This they did verbally, and physically, by beating them, by throwing them into prison on a number of occasions, and likewise by killing some of them, as in the case of Stephen and James. Consider the following example verses:

"Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."

John 11:47-50, KJV

"But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus."

Acts 4:15-18, KJV

"Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison."

Acts 5:17-18, KJV

"Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."

Acts 5:26-29, KJV

"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people."

Acts 12:1-4, KJV

"And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."

Acts 16:19-24, KJV

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

2 Corinthians 11:23-27, KJV

So again, be advised that you may face serious resistance if you attempt to establish any kind of home fellowship which is not blessed by and sanctioned by the local religious and government authorities. In this day and age where everyone has been thoroughly conditioned against anything which even slightly resembles a cult, the potential for persecution is even more of a reality. The powers that be have effectively used the mainstream media to publish stories occasionally, which will shock the general public into submission, and cause them to accept their way of thinking, so that they are even willing to surrender some of their personal freedoms, all supposedly for the sake of peace and personal security.

As I explain in other articles, organized religion is tightly controlled by the government through tax deductions and their non-profit status under Section 501(c)(3) of the US Internal Revenue Code. As a result, most church preachers are rather

careful about what they preach, so that they don't lose their prized status. In short, many of them have compromised the radical nature of the Gospel message, in order to receive the blessings of the corrupt system with which they spiritually fornicate. In reality, they aren't that much different from Babylon riding the Beast in the Book of Revelation, because Babylon the Great is likewise a false religious system. In contrast, the authorities don't have as much direct control over private Christian fellowships. Thus, they prefer to simply stamp you out, before you even get started. So much for religious freedom in America!

Now obviously, I realize that for some of my readers, I am probably presenting a rather large challenge by proposing the idea of forming a home fellowship. Undoubtedly, some of you are thinking to yourselves, "Well, I would really like to try something like this, but I have no experience. I don't have any formal theological training, so where would I start? What would we do? What would I teach?". The fact that you even feel that way reveals how much you have been indoctrinated by the church system. Organized religion has purposely made you feel and think that way, so that you remain totally dependent on them. In a word, they want you to keep going to church.

However, believe it or not, the very fact that you feel so helpless and incapable is actually in your favor, because it will force you to depend entirely on the Lord for guidance. But, to give you some assistance, allow me to again suggest that you consider reading articles such as "Where Are the First Century Churches?", "The Only Credentials You Need!", and "The Wisdom of God vs the Philosophy of Men". It is my personal conviction that with the Spirit of God, and a love for His Word, you are just as prepared for this task as the ignorant fishermen and hated tax collectors who Jesus chose for His Disciples almost two thousand years ago. God will empower you by His Holy Spirit, just as He empowered them. Consider what Luke wrote in the Acts of the Apostles:

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

Acts 4:13, KJV

If you possess the Spirit of God, that is all you need. As I also point out in other articles, after Paul came to Christ, he arrived at a point in his life where he viewed his former

life -- which apparently also included a lot of theological head-stuffing at the feet of the Pharisee Gamaliel -- as dung. It became worthless in his sight. In fact, he basically tells us that he had to unlearn much of it, and learn anew during his quiet time of personal revelation with the Lord, as we see by these verses:

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Galatians 1:11-12, KJV

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,"

Philippians 3:8, KJV

So my advice to you is that you just trust the Lord. Simply go in the direction in which you believe He wants you to go, and He will take care of the rest. Simply start out small, and start out simple. Maybe in the beginning, it will just be you and a friend or two talking about the Bible together in the privacy of your home. Perhaps they will mention your weekend get-togethers to a friend, and then a few more folks will be added to your fellowship. Thus it will slowly grow as the Lord leads. As we read in the Book of Acts:

". . . And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Acts 2:47, KJV

All I can tell you is that when a few people get together to honor the Lord and His Word, Jesus told us that He would be in the midst of them, right? That is your fellowship, and it is as blessed of God as one of those large churches. Who is to say otherwise? What makes your small home fellowship any less legitimate than one of those overstuffed megachurches? I have said it before, and I will say it again: God is not impressed by large numbers. He is interested in quality, and He is touched by a heart which is sincere, and dedicated to Him. In my view, that most certainly leaves out some of the big fancy churches which are filled with worldly spiritless people who honor Him with their lips, but whose hearts are far from Him, and who have very little interest in obeying Him in their lives, by being faithful witnesses of His Word.

If you require some study materials for your home fellowship, I invite you to use the over six hundred and sixty topical King James Version Bible verse lists which are available on the Bill's Bible Basics website, as well as the three hundred and twenty plus articles which I have written over the years. Similar to this series, they contain a wealth of Scriptural and historical information. Maybe someone will bring up a certain topic during one of your fellowships, and you won't quite know how to respond. But then the Lord will remind you of something I wrote regarding that particular subject.

You could say something like, "Well, I don't really know how to answer your question properly, but I have a friend who wrote a very interesting article regarding this very topic. Would you like to read it together?". You don't have to do that, of course. It is entirely up to you. I just know that there is a lot of good material in my articles which will feed and inspire God's sheep; because most of it is quite centered around God's Word. As I said, the choice is really up to you.

I am simply convinced that if you get together with one or more people, and begin to uplift the Lord and His Word, He will take it from there. He will inspire you by His Spirit, and you will have a wonderful time together! Believe me; it is much better than attending church service every Sunday, and sitting through the same boring, monotonous, mechanical, spiritless routine. I know that in my personal life, when I start discussing the Bible with someone, it is hard to shut me up! I just love discussing His Word, and you will too!

Not only that, but as you begin to obey the Lord in this matter, something very interesting will happen. That is that as you inspire other people with the truth of God's Word, it will inspire you in return. It seems that sharing the Word has a reciprocal effect on those people who are sharing it. As you begin to pour out to others, the Lord will fill you up in return. That is just the way it works; which is why Jesus clearly said the following in the Gospel of John:

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

John 7:38, KJV

Before concluding this series, there is one more important issue which we need to discuss. I have purposely left it



until last, because for the woman who was involved in this particular situation, it may have proved to be the most difficult part of my answer for her to receive.

As some of you may have noticed, I approached this issue as if this Christian married couple was in agreement. Sadly, the truth of the matter is that they were not. The woman was not at all happy with their church, while the husband seemed to be quite content; so much so that he appeared to be telling her to look for another church, while he remained in the same one. At least that is how I understood her email message at the time. So in a similar situation where a Christian couple is not in agreement, how should they proceed? What does the Lord expect of them in such a situation?

As I stressed earlier in this series, when I am confronted with such difficult questions, in order to avoid doctrinal error, my inclination is to look directly to God's Word, in order to determine what it has to say regarding a certain issue. I just pray, open up my mind and heart to the Spirit, I start typing, and I expect the Lord to give me whatever I am supposed to share with a person. That is normally how it happens. I simply accept by faith that what I'm receiving is of God. Of course, the Lord realizes that due to my cautious nature, He has to speak to me directly from His Word. Thus it is that quite often, Bible verses will come to me as I am typing. That is the basic mechanics of how I write all of my articles. There is never an outline. Each article is simply a moment by moment work of inspiration.

To begin with, while the husband involved may disagree with me, I do not believe that this woman going to one church, while he attends another, is by any means the solution which would be most pleasing to the Lord. This kind of situation could prove to be extremely detrimental to their marriage relationship, and could result in some serious repercussions in the future. In fact, such an arrangement could easily end up ripping their marriage apart, because once spiritual unity is lost, physical unity soon follows on its heels. I suspect that there may be some of you reading this series who can testify to this very fact, sad to say.

Quite honestly, I believe that the Lord has already spoken to this woman regarding what He expects of her; and that it is for this reason that she mentioned about them being one in spirit in her message to me. This is obviously of concern to her. In essence then, all I can really do is build upon what

it seems the Lord has already shown her. While the remainder of my answer will probably not be very popular with certain modern-day feminists -- not that it really matters being as this series is directed to Christian women and not to worldly women -- and while I will probably be accused by some liberal minded women of being another male chauvinist -- no surprise there -- if we look to the Scriptures, and what they have to say concerning marriage relationships, the answer becomes very clear. If, like me, you stand upon the authority of the Bible, then please consider what the following verses have to say concerning this issue:

"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Genesis 3:16, KJV

"And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Mark 10:4-9, KJV

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one

flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

Ephesians 5:21-33, KJV

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."

Colossians 3:17-19, KJV

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

1 Timothy 2:9-14, KJV

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:"

1 Peter 3:1-5, KJV

As hard as it may be on a woman's pride, God made her to be a helpmeet to her husband. He made her to be in subjection to her husband. As the previous verses make clear, this does not mean that God made men to be tyrants over their wives. They are to love and respect their wives, just as Christ loves His Church. But in matters of decision-making, the man is to have the final word, regardless of whether or not his wife agrees with his decision. This is particularly true when the husband is an individual who knows and fears the Lord. Please keep in

mind that the majority of my articles and series are directed to a Christian audience, and NOT to worldly people who have no respect for God's Word. Thus, when I offer counsel, as in this case, it is likewise directed to a Christian audience.

To continue, if the husband in this particular case were a reprobate, and a person who does not know the Lord, or who perhaps even fights against the Lord, or who is an abusive tyrant, then perhaps this situation would be dealt with in a different manner. However, that is not the case here. We are discussing a Christian couple who has known the Lord for many years. Because of this fact, this woman is bound by God's Word to respect and obey her husband. That is the Biblical pattern established by the Lord, beginning with the Book of Genesis, and going through the New Testament.

So what are this woman's alternatives? What can she do while still remaining within the bounds of God's Word and honoring her husband's decision?

First of all, let me state plainly that I am not saying that she has to agree with her husband's belief that the leader of their church is one fine pastor. If three quarters of their original congregation has indeed left the church since this individual became the church's elder, then I am inclined to agree with her that something is seriously wrong somewhere. Exactly what that might be I honestly do not know, because I am not in their situation. Nevertheless, while she may not agree with her husband's perspective, she must submit to him as long as she remains with him.

At the same time, if she is that convinced in her heart that this pastor is not worthy of his position, then my suggestion to her is that she earnestly pray to the Lord, and ask Him to open the eyes of her husband, so that he'll likewise see the truth of the matter, and make the appropriate decision. While this may not be easy for her to do, there are really no other alternatives as far as I can tell, and it will require both faith and patience on her part. In fact, it may very well be that the Lord is trying to use this situation to teach her important lessons regarding faith, patience and trusting in Him.

Ultimately, I believe that united prayer, and finding God's Will, is really the key to this couple's situation. Instead of yielding to their pride and frustration, and firing heated answers at each other which may be both hurtful and damaging,

this man and woman each need to forsake their pride, forsake what they each want to do, and find out what the Lord wants them both to do together, and not apart. They need to seek to find out not what is pleasing in their own eyes, but rather what is pleasing in the Lord's eyes. They need to seek His highest Will, and not their own. They need to earnestly seek to strengthen the spiritual unity in their relationship, lest the situation really begins to fall apart.

While this process is ongoing, this woman is still obligated by God's Word to submit to her husband. Obviously, I realize that this is by no means an easy thing to do. To submit to someone when you really disagree with them in your heart can really test one's love, faith and patience. Furthermore, in the case of a husband-wife relationship such as this, it can severely test mutual respect as well. It is simply hard to respect someone when you strongly disagree with something that they are doing. To take this a step further, such a situation can also be a real test of humility, and dying to oneself.

Please go to part four for the conclusion of this series.

Written by Bill Kochman

[wordweaver777@gmail.com](mailto:wordweaver777@gmail.com)

<https://www.billkochman.com>

<https://www.csnet.live>

CHURCHIANITY OR CHRISTIANITY : WHICH DO YOU PRACTICE? : PART 4

Copyright 1994 - 2023 Bill's Bible Basics

Published On : April 2, 2000

Last Updated : September 28, 2023

The Challenge Of Respecting A Spouse You Don't Agree With, Verses Regarding Trusting The Lord, Possible Solutions To The Problem, Accepting The Challenge Of A Home Fellowship, Churchianity Versus Christianity, Essence Of Being A True Christian, First Century Evangelists, A Vision To Reach The Lost, Poultry Farms Chickens And Christians, Immune To The Word Of God, The Church Is The Bride Of Christ, We Are All

Branches On The Lord's Vine, Bearing Spiritual Fruit, When We Fail To Bear Fruit, The Parallel Between Physical Sexual Union And Spiritual Unity With Christ, Take Up The Challenge Of Starting A Home Fellowship, Closing Remarks, Reading List

As I concluded in part three of this series, a Christian woman having to submit to her husband even when she does not agree with a certain decision he has made, is by no means an easy thing to do. To submit to your spouse when you really disagree with them in your heart can really test your love, faith, patience and mutual respect. After all, it is hard to respect someone when you strongly disagree with something that they're doing. Not only that, but such a situation will really test one's humility as well. It is at times such as these that we must throw ourselves utterly on the Lord, and trust that He knows what He is doing; even if we don't. We need to have the confidence that God remains in control of the relationship, and that in the end, the situation will work out according to His perfect will. Consider this group of verses:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Isaiah 55:8-9, KJV

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Romans 8:28, KJV

"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

Psalms 55:22, KJV

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Proverbs 3:5-6, KJV

In this particular case, we can hope and pray that either one of two things will happen. First, this husband will come to understand the truth regarding this pastor, and the very serious damage that he is causing to his church. As a result,

the husband will decide that it is time for he and his wife to leave this church. Or second, the Lord will find a way to simply remove this pastor from his position of authority in the church, and provide the congregation with a more worthy, Spirit-led shepherd. If this church is large enough to have a church board, perhaps they can simply vote him out.

At the same time, I believe that this dear woman needs to seriously consider the challenge which I have presented in this series -- that is, to begin a fellowship in their home -- and to challenge her husband with the same. As I explain in articles such as "Are You Just A Baby Huey?", my personal impression is that in the United States of America -- and perhaps in other countries as well -- many people hold the erroneous view that the end-all of being a Christian, is to simply accept Jesus Christ as one's Lord and Savior, and to spend the remainder of one's life faithfully and obediently attending local church services on weekends, and perhaps on a few other holy days as well.

My friends, this is not what the Bible teaches by any means. What I have just described for you is simply churchianity. It isn't true Bible-based Christianity. The aforementioned idea is similar to a grapevine producing luscious grapes, and then leaving those grapes on the vine to slowly rot, when they are supposed to be eaten or used to produce raisins, wine or some other food product. Being as I amly discuss this subject in other articles, such as "The Parable of the Sower: Salvation and Service", I will not go into great detail here.

Allow me to simply state that during the First Century when our faith was born, becoming a true Disciple of Jesus Christ meant adopting the life of an evangelist, and going out on the road in order to win other souls to the Kingdom of God. It was a hard, danger-filled life which often required a lot of personal sacrifice, but it was also a very rewarding life, particularly in the eternal sense. Christianity was a living, growing faith. It was not the dead, rotten, self-satisfied, lethargic faith that we see today in so many modern churches. The Apostles and Disciples of the First Century had a vision for reaching the lost, as had been conveyed to them by Jesus himself, as is evidenced by the following group of verses:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"

Matthew 28:19, KJV

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Mark 16:15, KJV

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Luke 24:46-47, KJV

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

John 15:16, KJV

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."

John 17:18, KJV

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Acts 1:8, KJV

"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

Acts 5:42, KJV

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

2 Timothy 2:2, KJV

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

2 Timothy 4:2, KJV

Sadly, many Christians today remind me of chickens that are maintained in small cages on poultry and dairy farms. As you may know, they can barely move around, and they are stuffed with feed until they are ready for the slaughter. In similar fashion, many people today are so stuffed with the Word of God, that many of them are either sick of hearing it, or



else they have heard it for so long, that they have totally hardened themselves against its eternal truths. In fact, in many cases, they have become totally immune to its effects on their lives.

As I explain in the aforementioned article, God's Word is a precious seed, and it is meant to be planted liberally, so that it will produce abundant fruit -- or saved souls -- for the Kingdom of God. God is in a constant war against Satan, to win as many souls to His Kingdom as He possibly can. But how does God accomplish this goal? He does it by using us -- His weak, human vehicles -- to complete the task. As I point out in the series "Once Upon A Time: A True Story", the Lord expects us -- His Bride, the Church -- to bear spiritual fruit for His Kingdom. It is for this very reason that both Jesus and the Apostle Paul spoke in the following allegorical manner:

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing . . . Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples . . . Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

John 15:4-5, 8, 16, KJV

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Romans 7:4, KJV

If we are not in some way producing spiritual fruit in our lives, by winning others to Christ, or by helping to feed and nurture those people who have already come to Christ, then we are simply dead branches on the Lord's vine. Well, be advised that God does not like dead, fruitless branches. Jesus said that such unfruitful branches will be cast into the fire, as we can determine by the following two verses:

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit . . . If a man abide not in me,

he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

John 15:2, 6, KJV

Just as a man and a woman cannot bear physical fruit -- in other words, children in their lives -- unless they engage in physical sexual union, in similar fashion, neither can we Christians bear spiritual fruit in our lives -- or souls won to God's Kingdom -- if we are not in unity with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and obeying His Will. As shocking as that may seem to some conservative Christians, that is the plain truth of the Scriptures, as is clearly exemplified by the previous set of verses.

So this is the challenge that I am presenting to you today concerning organized religion, churchianity, Christianity and home fellowships. If you are not happy or satisfied in the church in which you currently find yourself; if you feel that your spiritual life has become stagnated; or honestly believe that your current situation is holding you back from becoming a more fruitful branch for the Lord, then why don't you do something about it? Don't just lazily accept the status quo.

You really only have two choices. Either join a church that is more active and productive for the Lord, or better yet, if you have the faith, the vision and the motivation, start a local fellowship in your own home. That is, a home church. Simply get back on fire for the Lord! Be a burning ember for Jesus Christ! Don't be an overgrown, spiritually-retarded Baby Huey, or a fat chicken in a cage! Bear fruit for the Kingdom of God! What do you say? He is more than willing. are you? Churchianity or Christianity; which do you practice?

With these thoughts I will bring this series to a close. I trust that you have enjoyed it, that it has encouraged you, that you have learned something from it, and that it has been a blessing in your life. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you would take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thank you so very much! May God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in

this series, or which contain topics which are related to this series. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server:

Abundant Life Doctrine: Scripturally Exposed!

Are You a Burning Ember for the Lord?

Are You Just a Baby Huey?

Civil Disobedience and Christian Persecution

Exposing the Tactics of the Enemy

Gargoyles: Satan Loves Church Buildings!

Money-Making Bible Hucksters and Mammon

Once Upon a Time: A True Story

Pontifex Maximus: Pagan High Priest to Roman Catholic Pope

Rise of the False Church

So You Really Think You Are So Humble?

The Only Credentials You Need!

The Parable of the Sower: Salvation and Service

The Wisdom of God vs the Philosophy of Men

Tradition or Truth? Old Wine or New Wine?

What Is God's Will for My Life?

Where Are the First Century Churches?

Who Is Babylon the Great?

Written by Bill Kochman

[wordweaver777@gmail.com](mailto:wordweaver777@gmail.com)

<https://www.billkochman.com>

<https://www.csnet.live>