

## **"Depart From Me ..."**

The Bible says in Matthew 7:22-23, *"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

Many, many, today fall into the category mentioned. They are making all kinds of claims of doing "worthy works" and always, "in the name of the Lord." Just to make a declaration that a thing is "in the name of the Lord" or by his authority, doesn't make it so. Some of these have been exposed as religious frauds. The word "iniquity" as is used in the quoted verse is translated by the word "lawlessness" in several other translations. That is, these people the Lord was talking about were spiritual "outlaws." They were doing their "wonderful" works outside the realm of Bible authority.

But hear what the Lord says their end will be: *"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [or lawlessness]."*

**- by Bob Craig**

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## **We Love You This Much**

Regarding the discipline that a parent ought to administer to a child, the word of the Lord says, *"He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes"* (Pro. 13:24). The worst thing a parent can do for an unruly child is to let him go unrestrained. True love of a parent is demonstrated in the correction of a rebellious child.

This principle applies in the church's discipline (or lack of) toward disorderly members. If we love them we will discipline them. Paul told the Thessalonians, *"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us"* (2 Thes. 3:6). To the Corinthians he noted that this is church action that should be taken *"when ye are gathered together"* (1 Cor. 5:4).

Brethren, when we fail to discipline the unruly of the church we are manifesting a lack of love. It is as though we are saying, "we love you THIS much" and the "this" is a centimeter. Fact is, to forgo withdrawing from the disorderly is evidence of hatred - not love.

May we grow in our love one for another!

**- by David McPherson**

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## **Check Your Tongue**

For many years, doctors would take a close look at the tongue of a patient in order to determine his health. The ability of many doctors to diagnose various illnesses simply by checking the tongue is amazing. While physicians gauge the health of an individual by the tongue, the great Physician can gauge the health of the soul by the tongue. In relation to how the tongue speaks, Jesus said, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil things" (Matthew 12:35). Often, we can get a good idea about a man's character by the way he speaks. Our speech is very important. Not only does our tongue reflect the health of our soul, but the health of our soul influences the tongue. Paul spoke often about the proper use of the tongue, and James places a great deal of stress upon controlling the tongue (Eph. 4:25, 29-32; James 3:1-12). Not only can your corrupted soul defile your tongue, but your tongue can defile your clean soul. Oh, the importance of the tongue! So much so that Jesus stated, "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:37). So, while you are living day by day, don't forget to check your tongue!

**- by Michael Pickford**

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*Editor's note: One of our young Christians provided the following thoughts . . .*

## ***Why Were YOU Baptized? A Self-Reflection Exercise:***

Circle your reason or reasons. Be 100% honest.

- A) Was it because you wanted to be forgiven?
- B) Was it because you wanted to be close with God?
- C) Was it because you wanted to do right?
- D) Was it because you wanted to give your life over to Him?
- E) All of the above
- F) Other - If other reasoning, what is it?

Additional Points:

- 1) Are you still doing what you committed to do when you were baptized?
  - 2) Do you feel you are doing right?
  - 3) Would those who care for you feel okay about the way you are living? Does it bring pain to you or them?
  - 4) If so, do you want to make it right? How can you make it right? Are you going to make it right?
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## ***Turning Forgiveness Around***

We hear it frequently in the news these days. It has been a common defense in some high profile criminal cases. The basic argument is that people can be excused for committing even hideous crimes if they can demonstrate that something awful happened in their past. Unfortunately, this approach has proven successful in our perverted justice system. Murders, kidnapers and sexual offenders of every sort have been set free or have had their sentences reduced. As a result, we are seeing more and more criminals rush to assume "victim" status.

It is happening in the church, too. It is not uncommon for sinful brethren to attempt to "turn the tables" on those who are trying to restore them. "You didn't show the proper love toward me;" "You were unkind and didn't help me enough when I needed you;" "You were too harsh in the way you rebuked me;" etc., etc., etc. You see, they have learned how to become the "victims."

We agree that brethren can sometimes approach situations in the wrong way. All of us need to show love, forbearance, patience and kindness. Sometimes we fail in these things. Everyone can do better.

But, we are weary of sinners turning the whole matter of forgiveness around. If they have their way, the faithful ones are forced to beg them for forgiveness, while their own sins are ignored. This simply will not work!

Observe the case of Peter rebuking Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:18-24). Simon was told that "wickedness" and a bad heart had left him in the "gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." Surely he could have complained about Peter's harsh words, or unloving manner. Undoubtedly he could have countered with accusations about how he had been mistreated by others. Instead, he humbly accepted the rebuke and requested prayer. Sinners in the church today need to learn a lesson from him. Think!

***- by Greg Gwin***