

WHAT IS THE REAL PROBLEM?

From time to time it is necessary to preach and teach on different problems that exist and to point out why it is wrong for individuals to engage in certain activities or to act in a manner that is contrary to the teaching of God's word. How wonderful when those who are doing wrong will be so influenced by the word of God that they will cease that which is wrong and will conform their lives to the will of the Lord. Such is indeed a cause for rejoicing, however this is not always the result we receive after teaching the word of God.

Sometimes those who are doing wrong have the attitude that they are going to do as they please and NO ONE is going to tell them what to do. Others will not be so arrogant in their reaction but will still persist in their wrong doing. Some will even rebel to the point of offering opposition against the truth and those who teach the truth. Even though their reactions to the teaching of the truth may vary somewhat I am convinced that the real problem is the same in each case.

What is the real problem? Why is it that some will forsake the assembling of themselves with the saints (Hebrews 10:25) and will hear lessons presented exhorting them to repent and become faithful in their service to the Lord but they will continue to forsake and often do not even seem "bothered" by the lessons presented?

Why is it that some will hear lessons presented on giving (1 Corinthians 16:1,2) and know that they are not giving as they should but will make no effort at all to increase their contribution? I have even known of some who would DECREASE the amount they gave if someone were to teach what the scriptures have to say about giving. What is the real problem?

There are many lost in sin. You teach on the Christian's responsibility to teach the word to those who are lost that they may hear and be encouraged to obey. However, few will make any attempt to teach their friends and neighbors. Few ever express any interest in "personal work" or in any teaching that would help one in doing such work. Again, we ask, "What is the problem?"

A brother is overtaken in a fault. Members are reminded of their responsibility to this one (Galatians 6:1), but no one even makes an effort to go and talk to this brother or to learn what may be done to encourage this one to return to the Lord. Why?

As we mentioned earlier, the problem is the same in all of the above situations. The real problem is that many have not yet learned to love the truth, to love the souls of men (even their own), and therefore have not yet come to realize how important it is that each individual submit his life in obedience to the Lord. When men come to realize the value of one soul (Matthew 16:26) they will be ready to do whatever is necessary to bring about the salvation of that soul, however until men gain this understanding or develop this love for the souls of men (especially their own soul) you can preach and teach all you want to and these will not show any desire to obey. When men have the right attitude toward truth and toward the Lord they will obey from the heart (Romans 6:17,18) that they may have the hope of an eternal home in heaven.

✍ James Hahn