

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

August 15

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Living Faithfully and Fearfully

I recently saw someone wearing a t-shirt that read, “Living Faithfully not Fearfully.” This got me thinking about what it means and how it isn’t entirely correct. One definition from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines fear as “an unpleasant, often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger.” With this definition the t-shirt makes sense.

The t-shirt is telling people to live confidently in their faith of the Lord, but not to act out of fear of God. The idea is, we should be motivated by faith, and not be scared of consequences. I agree; our lives should not be motivated because we are scared.

However, in Ecclesiastes 12:13, we are told to fear God. “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all.” Proverbs 3:7 says, “Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil.” Is Solomon telling us to be scared of God? Are we being told to be motivated by the consequences?

There are other definitions of fear that help clarify these verses even further. Another definition of fear is “profound reverence and awe especially towards God.” In this case, the

shirt should read “Living Faithfully and Fearfully.” As Christians, we are to be living faithfully with fearfulness and respect for God.

Our faithful actions are a demonstration of our God-fearing lives. We are shown the first Christians on the day of Pentecost were fearful of God. “Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles” (Acts 2:43). We see these Christians had reverence of God. They were recognizing God and Jesus and were growing in reverence towards God and Jesus.

As modern-day Christians we should also be living with reverence towards God. If we are reverent to God, we will be recognizing the authority of Jesus. “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:18,19).

When we recognize His authority, we will follow His commandments and live faithfully and fearfully.

✍ Andrew Thomas

Two Kinds of Sorrow

The apostle Paul declared in his second epistle to the Corinthians that he did not regret that his first letter to them led them to be sorry for their evil ways. You see, Paul tells those in Corinth that he now rejoices, not that they were made sorry, but rather because their sorrow led them to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:8-9). Then, the inspired apostle explains that there are two

kinds of sorrow. The first being godly sorrow, which produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted. With the second being the sorrow of the world, which produces death (2 Corinthians 7:10). So, knowing that, let's examine these two kinds of sorrow.

Godly Sorrow

Friend, godly sorrow has God in it, and in Romans 2:4, Paul informed, "the goodness of God leads to repentance." Now, it is important to note that godly sorrow is not repentance, but rather it precedes and is necessary for repentance, as Paul stated, "*For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted...*" (2 Corinthians 7:10). You see, my friends, for one to truly repent of their sins, they must sincerely be sorry for their transgressions against God, and they must turn from their unrighteousness and continue in it no more (Ezekiel 18:32).

We have in the Scriptures some examples of godly sorrow leading to repentance, with one of the most familiar being in Acts 2. There, after Peter and the other apostles preached Jesus Christ to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, they (i.e. the Jews) were cut to the heart. Simply meaning, they were truly sorry for what they had done. This sorrow then led them to ask the all-important question of, "What shall we do?" Peter, then responded to them, "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38). We go on to read in verse 41, "*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.*" The point is, those who responded to the words of Peter were those who were lead to repentance by godly sorrow.

Sorrow of The World

When one chooses to not comply with the will of God, and instead choose to comply with what satisfies or advantages them although they are sorrowful about it, their sorrow is of the world.

An example of one having sorrow of the world is found in Matthew 19:16-22. Here, we read about a rich young ruler who comes to Christ inquiring about what he must do in order to inherit eternal life. We learn that Jesus told him to sell his possessions and give to the poor, and to come follow Him. However, the rich young ruler went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Therefore, the sorrow of the world was possessed by the rich young ruler, for he was not willing to comply with the will of the Lord, but rather chose to continue with what benefitted him.

Once more, there are two kinds of sorrow. Godly sorrow which produces repentance, leading to salvation; and sorrow of the world, which leads to death!

✍ Brad Phillips

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

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