

The Reflector



“Despiteful”

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. (Romans 1:28-32 KJV)

Among the ungodly attitudes of the pagan world who “did not like to retain God in their knowledge” was that of being *despiteful*. It means insolent, bold rudeness, insulting behavior or speech. God says that “they who commit such things are worthy of death” (verse 32).

Maybe it is just our casual, care-free society, but I think I see a disturbing trend among professed Christians toward this sin. Behavior and speech toward and about those who should command our special respect seems to have deteriorated into a near-insolent stance if not completely so. “Hi Dad,” is hardly the way to address the Ruler

of the universe as was reportedly done by a young man in a public prayer in a Texan congregation. God is not a mere “buddy,” but our Maker and Sustainer, with all the majesty that goes with it. Head of civil government are being treated with contempt all over the world.

One needs to keep in mind that there are those greater than he for various reasons, before whom he displays special respect and not to be approached as peers. It might have been alright for Joseph to have enjoyed the “casual look” in the company of his fellow prisoners, but when the Pharaoh sent for him he “shaved himself, and changed his raiment” (Gen. 41:14). Special respect was called for when standing in the king’s presence, so Joseph had some getting ready to do. Insolence grows out of an unholy pride that says I am equal with anybody and probably better than most. An attitude completely foreign to the very spirit taught by Jesus, our Savior (Matt. 18:1-3).

The first seeds of despitefulness are usually sown in the home. Children are *allowed* to insult parents without fear of consequences. “Disobedient to parents” is also listed in verse 30. Children need to be made aware of the fact that parents have a special place of honor (Eph. 6:2). They may not always be perfect, but they are always parents. One’s parents are not

to be treated, spoken to or spoken about disrespectfully. It is a shame the way some children give their parents the lip. One may not have to agree with his parents always — but he should disagree with respect. The idea that a father should be just like a “buddy” to his son or a mother should be just like a “pal” to her daughter, in my judgement, contributes to the tread toward disrespect. A young man or young lady can find buddies and pals all over the place, but only one dad and one mom to look up to. They are special! They command special respect and consideration.

Special respect for age is a Biblically sound principle. “Thou shalt rise before the hoary (white or grey) head, and honour the face of the old man...” (Lev. 19:32). Elihu had urgent words for Job, but he “waited til Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.” (Job 32:4). The New Testament commands respect for age (1 Tim. 5:1-2). The elder (older man) is to be corrected more gently than a younger man. Older people should be addressed with extra respect, different from one’s peers. Older people may need correction from time to time, they should receive it, but it should be with less sharpness than for a younger person.

“Civil disobedience” are words coined in our age to cover up for old-fashioned rebellion and anarchy. A faithful Christian will have no part of it. He is commanded to show respect and obedience to civil authority for conscience sake. (Rom. 13:1-5). He shows honor and respect for civil officials (1 Pet. 2:17; 1 Tim. 2:1-2) even when the officials themselves may be less than honorable. Time may come that one must obey the higher

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Three Attributes Of Sound Doctrine

2 Tim. 4:1-5

Introduction:

- A. Has "sound doctrine" become irrelevant to modern Christians?
 - 1. Doctrinal themes unpopular both in pulpit and classes.
 - 2. "Be practical", "Be relevant" is modern cry.
 - 3. Even needed subjects on life's problems are not approached with doctrinal their doctrinal basis.
- B. Sound doctrine is essential to spiritual health.
 - 1. *Sound* means healthy. (HUGIAINO—hygene).
 - 2. *Doctrine* means that which is taught — From the Scriptures. (2 Tim. 3:16,17).
- C. Sound doctrine is not a matter of insignificance.
 - 1. Important to those who teach and hear. (1 Tim. 4:16).
 - 2. Important ingredient in preaching. ("with longsuffering and doctrine")
 - 3. Important to test doctrine for its soundness.
- D. Sound doctrine has three attributes as described in the text:

Discussion:

I. It Is Of Word.—*"Preach the word"* (v. 2).

- A. The word is powerful. (Heb. 4:12; cf. Rom. 1:16; Acts 2:37).
- B. The word is able to save. (Jas. 1:21,22).
- C. The word is complete. (2 Tim. 3:16,17; Jude 3; Gal. 1:8,9).

II. It Is Practical. — *"Convince, rebuke, exhort"* (v.2)

- A. It convinces the unconvinced.
 - 1. There are people not convinced of their sinful state before God.
 - 2. There are people not convinced of one God, Lord, baptism, etc.
 - 3. There are people not convinced of need to assemble, worship, work, purity.
- B. It rebukes the rebellious.
 - 1. There are people who know their sinful state, but are rebellious.
 - 2. There are people who know right way, but refuse to conform to it.
- C. It exhorts the discouraged and striving.
 - 1. The weak and discouraged need encouragement to overcome.
 - 2. The faithful striving Christian needs encouragement to keep on. (cf. Heb. 10:25).

III. It Is Urgent. — *"In season, out of season"*.

- A. If brethren do not feed regularly on sound doctrine will go step by step into error.
 - 1. Soon, they will not endure (hold up—support) sound teaching. (v. 3).
 - 2. Next, they will select teachers to teach to suit them. (v. 4).
 - 3. Next, they will turn ears from truth — will not listen any more. (v.4).
 - 4. Next, they will turn to false religion or fables. (v. 4).
- B. If one does not accept and support sound doctrine NOW — "time will come..."

Conclusion:

- A. Believe, obey, teach and support sound doctrine while it still appeals to you.
- B. Teach and support sound doctrine in all forms: reproof, rebuke, exhortation.

Lights In The World

Phil. 2:15

Introduction:

- A. As Christians, we must live in the world, in the midst of its people.
 - 1. Not to be hermits. (1 Cor. 5:10; Mt. 9:11,12).
 - a. Not trumpet blowers. (cf. Matt. 6:12).
 - b. Nor candle stuffers. (Matt. 5:15).
 - 2. To have positive influence upon world.
 - a. Light in midst of darkness. (text, cf. Matt. 5:13).
 - b. Salt to season the world. (Matt. 5:12).
 - 3. To have conduct worthy of gospel. (Phil. 1:27).
- B. As Christians, we can shine as lights in five ways taught in Philippians.

Discussion:

I. By Our *United* Stand. (1:27-28).

- A. United with one another. (2:1,2; 4:2,3; cf. "fellow" workers)
 - 1. Paul commanded it. (1 Cor. 1:10).
 - 2. Maturity demands it. (1 Cor.3:1-4).
- B. United for truth. (1:27)
 - 1. This unity Jesus prayed for. (John 17:20-23).
 - 2. This is not "ecumenical" type unity.
- C. United against error. (1:28)
 - 1. Striving together against all kinds of sin. (Heb. 12:4).
 - 2. Striving together to internal enemies of truth.(3:17-19; Rom. 16:17).
 - 3. Striving together to divide truth from error. (cf. 2 Cor. 6:14,17; Lk. 12:51-53).

II. By Our *Unselfish* Interests. (Phil. 2:3,4).

- A. Such promotes harmony. (strife [KJV], faction [ASV], selfish ambition [NKJV])
- B. Such looks out for the welfare of others.
 - 1. Will sacrifice personal gain for others. (cf. Rom. 9:3; 1 Cor. 8:13; 9:19-22)
 - 2. Will eliminate hypocritical service. (cf. Matt. 6:1-4).
- C. Such follows a perfect pattern. (2:5-11).

III. By Our *Unreserved* Obedience. (Phil. 2:12)

- A. Constant obedience — "always". (v. 12)
- B. Reverent obedience — "fear and trembling". (v. 12,13).
- C. Willing obedience — "without complaining and disputing". (v. 14)

IV. By Our *Unblemished* Character. (Phil. 2:15).

- A. Morally upright. (cf. Eph. 5:1-12).
- B. Spiritually sound—"holding forth the word of life" (v. 16).

V. By Our *Unruffled* Disposition. (4:4,5).

- A. Moderation (gentleness) known to all men. (4:5, "epi" intense "eikos" reasonable).
- B. Contentment in whatever state. (4:11).
- C. Calm and collected. (4:6-9).

Conclusion:

- A. How brightly does your light shine in midst of world?
- B. What kind of impression for Christianity are you leaving on the world?

authority of God, as the apostles on occasion (Acts 5:29), but even then he respectfully disobeys civil authorities. It may be necessary to rebuke the moral conduct of public officials, as did John the Baptist in the case of Herod, but even there it should be done without a spirit of insolence or rancor. In all this, one must not confuse his own likes and dislikes or his own sense of fairness and justice with the will of God. If one must ignore or otherwise disobey public officials—he should be prepared to point to the specific decree of God that prohibits his obeying the civil law. This, the apostles could do. They were under orders from heaven to “preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15,16; Matt. 28:18-20), the very thing the officials were prohibiting.

In the church, there is a disturbing drift toward despising the spiritually mature. Elders are to be “esteemed very highly in love for their works sake” (1 Thess. 5:12,13) and are to be especially “remembered” and “honored” (Heb. 13:7,17). Yet, in many places elders (and older preachers) are esteemed very lowly. This does not mean to accept, without investigation, anything they might say or do (cf. Acts 17:11). This does not mean to exalt anyone into some kind of “clergy.” This does mean to show respect due one for his “works sake.” One’s years of study and experience in the word of God should count for something. Yet, there is a marked trend in the church to discount the value of such maturity of knowledge and experience. Too often, a young “know-it-all” expects his judgement to be worth just as much as that of his more experienced brethren. It is too easy to lightly toss aside the teaching and advice of mature brethren, with a “well-that-is-just-his-opinion” attitude without adequate consideration of the matter in the light of the scriptures; and the fact that experienced brethren are more likely to see dangers easily overlooked by the inexperienced. If, after due consideration, it is proven that the mature person has indeed

erred in word or deed—the correction process should be set into motion, but with all the respect for the age and experience of the erring one. The fact that one may have spent hours in study means nothing to the novice overcome by pride and a sense of his own importance—he must let folks know that he can “do his own thing” and thinking. For shame! On the other hand, more mature brethren would do well to watch their pride in dealing with others—one can be wrong at any level of experience!

Above all, one must approach **God** in all reverence. One should respect His name (Matt. 6:19). It should not be profaned as suggested at the beginning of this article. One should reverence the Bible as the word of **God**. One should worship Him in reverence (John 4:24). When we meet for public worship, we pray to **God**. We sing to **God**. We study and preach **God’s** word. We remember **Christ’s** death in the **Lord’s** supper. These things should be approached with all the awe that these facts and the occasion demands and not with a casual attitude. One’s appearance and deportment in worship should be above the casualness of a dormitory bull-session, a sports pep rally or just hanging around the house. Yet, I fear that it is often approached with just such informal casualness—even though the service is directed to the most majestic and powerful of all beings, the God of heaven.

The gospel of Christ, applied to the heart, will remove despectfulness from our lives—if believed and obeyed. (Rom. 1:16).—**Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.**, written in February, 1975

Schedule of Services

Sundays:

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.

Worship 10:45 a.m.

Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesdays:

Bible Class 10:00 a.m.

Bible Classes . . . 7:30 p.m.

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Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.
Editor

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