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UNITED WAY

Boyd Sellers

Q. On a recent television talk show, a gay senior citizens group was interviewed. They said they were supported by United Way. Is this true and is this the same United Way we support in Jackson? - G.B. - Jackson

Q. Is it true that United Way supports and provides funds for abortions? - R.W. - Jackson

A. United Way organizations across the nation are locally governed and chartered, so some groups may support gay organizations or abortions services. However, the Jackson-Madison County United Way organization does not provide funding for any such groups, said Richard Carruth, executive director of the local organization. There are more than 2,200 United Way organizations in the country, but all are locally controlled. The needs and desires of the community dictate organizations. The national office of United Way acts as a support organization and handles national advertising, said Carruth said.

The above article appeared in the Jackson Sun, Jackson, TN, Nov. 7, 1980. It says a great deal about the organization called UNITED WAY - especially since there is so much pressure applied by some companies to get their employees to contribute. Some of the agencies supported by U.W. are objectionable to say the least.

I cannot conscientiously contribute to

United Way. (Others have more dramatic stories to tell than I, but, back in the 1960's I was refused a job for that reason!)

Here are some of my reasons for refusing to support U.W.:

1. As the newspaper article above suggests, U.W. lends its support, in some places, to homosexual groups and groups that fund and promote abortions (such as PLANNED PARENTHOOD). As a Christian, I cannot give money or lend support to such immoral movements.

2. United Way supports religious organizations that teach false doctrines. Various Catholic, Jewish, and Lutheran organizations, as well as the Salvation Army are among those supported by the U.W. in the Indianapolis area. Now I am aware that they might do some good. However, if these religious organizations are interested in doing "good" in their name and for their glory, let them support their own works. At the same time, as one who is interested in the truth, I cannot support them or their agencies because I cannot lend support to their false doctrines! And when one gives to an institution that is promoting false doctrine, he does just that. There would be no difference between directly contributing to such an organization and in supporting the U.W. which in turn sends it to them.

3. I believe that FORCED giving is wrong. The amount of money involved is not in question. Some have argued that it is "such a small amount". However, that is not the problem. It is not how much money is required -- It is what the money is going for (false religion and immoral practices) that I object to. No one has the right to pressure and coerce somebody else into giving to religious groups (or any groups) that he believes to be in error. Further, to earmark your contribution to U.W. for a particular organization is nothing more than a bookkeeping camouflage because ALL the agencies still receive the amount agreed upon by those in control. T
R

A Strict God

James L. Zachary

Children usually learn at an early age that one parent is more strict than the other. They learn how to play on the sympathy of the parent who is not quite so strict. In school, children learn that certain teachers are more strict than others. The same is true of employers, police officers, etc. We need to learn that being strict is not necessarily a bad thing. Webster says the word means, "governing by exact rules." We need to learn that despite the religious world's perception of an over lenient God, that the God of heaven is a strict father who expects his will to be kept.

There are several Old Testament examples of the point we are making. For instance, EVE DISCOVERED THAT GOD WAS A STRICT GOD. As you read Genesis 3 you notice the severe punishment described in verses 16-19. These curses were pronounced as the result of what some might call "just a little sin" (v. 6), that was committed just one time. Just one sin separated Adam and Eve from God. (vv. 23,24)

In Genesis 4:1-15, CAIN FOUND OUT THAT GOD WAS A STRICT GOD. Of Cain's sacrifice the Hebrew writer said, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11:4). God's strictness was first realized in his

preference for the obedient sacrifice of Abel. Then, after Cain's erupting rage and the murder of Abel, he was banished and a curse put upon him. Cain was separated from God as the result of ONE act of unbridled anger.

SAUL KNEW THAT GOD WAS A STRICT GOD AFTER HIS DISOBEDIENCE. He was given instructions to destroy Amalek (1 Sam. 15:1-23). Samuel specifically said, "utterly destroy all that they have, and spare him not" (v. 3). For the most part, Saul obeyed the will of the Lord, that is, "he utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword" (v. 8).

There was just one minor infraction: "He spared Agag [the king] and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them" (v. 9). It could be argued that he had obeyed the intent or spirit of the law, he just didn't obey the letter of the law given to him. However, because of this "minor" sin of omission he was rejected as king (v. 23).

Others who learned of the strict nature of God's judgments include Nadab and Abihu, Achan, and Uzzah. In each case the sins were matters that men would probably regard as "little" or insignificant matters. Each time it is just ONE of the "little sins" that is mentioned, and each time the offender was counted guilty and severely punished. These examples should teach us all something about the nature of God's judgments.

In addition to these examples there are several New Testament examples of the strictness and severity of Jehovah. For example, we are told that even THE ANGELS FOUND GOD TO BE A STRICT GOD. Jude 6 teaches that when angels sinned they were duly punished. Peter said, "...God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4).

THE APOSTLE PAUL KNEW THAT GOD WAS A STRICT. Spiritually he did not consider himself to have arrived (Phil. 3:13-14). He knew he still could be lost (1 Cor. 9:27), so he would constantly "keep under" himself.

THE RICH MAN LEARNED OF GOD'S STRICTNESS. Read Luke 16:19-21. Now, there is no doubt that our God is a God of love (John 3:16). Furthermore, were it not for his grace there would be no hope of salvation (Eph. 2:8,9). In the last few years, however, preachers have put so much emphasis on these aspects, that they have overshadowed the fact that God is a just and severe as well. The Hebrew writer said, "...give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard,... For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation;..." (Hebrews 2:1-3).

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IMPRESSING OTHERS AND DECEIVING SELF

David Thomley

He was, without doubt, the best dressed golfer on the course. Not only were his clothes and shoes color coordinated, but so were his golf balls and tees! His custom-designed clubs were kept in immaculate condition and carried in a hand-sewn genuine leather golf bag which had to be ordered from the company headquarters. Every year he renewed his subscription to Golf Digest, and his den was cluttered with video cassettes made by the professionals explaining how to be a great golfer. For several years he had maintained membership at a very exclusive country club. Although he had tremendous advantages going for him, this fellow did have one problem. He was a lousy golfer!

Sometimes a Christian plays the same kind of game with his spiritual life that this golfer plays with his sports life. He attends every class and assembly at his congregation, and rushes from place to place during the week to attend other meetings. The shelves in his study at home are lined with multiple sets of expensive reference works and commentaries. His mailbox is stuffed with religious periodicals and bulletins, as well as cassette tapes he orders from lectureships around the country. He, too, has tremendous advantages going for him; but he, too, has one problem. He is a lousy Christian!

Jesus encountered a group of people

who equated "appearing righteous" with "being righteous". These folks were diligent in giving alms, praying, and fasting. They said the right words, wore the right clothes, and went to the right places. They did have a problem, however. They were lousy Jews, and Jesus called them "hypocrites". They were not what they appeared to be (Matthew 6:1-18).

Surely a Christian will want to capitalize on all the "advantages" available to him. This would include good tools (study materials) with which to work and good associations which would edify him and bring him to maturity in Christ. It is possible, however, for a man to impress others and delude himself concerning his spiritual maturity. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves" (James 1:22). There is nothing wrong with buying exercise equipment. Just be sure, however, that you "exercise thyself unto godliness" (1 Timothy 4:7), lest your gymnasium become your facade.

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Takin' Time

Ed Harrell

About twenty-five years ago, while preaching in a small Tennessee town, I was told an interesting tale by an old brother. I have repeated it several times since in tense committee meetings in university conference rooms.

This brother was a merchant and he had begun his career in sales as an itinerant peddler in rural Tennessee. The countryside still had the look of the frontier in those days and he frequently found himself in wild and unpredictable circumstances.

One day this brother drove his truck to the end of a country road, selling to the farmers scattered along the way. At the road's end he encountered an old man in a wagon who told him that there were others living deep in the woods beyond the road. If he would load some of his goods in the old man's wagon, he could ride into the forest with him and sell to them.

As they rode along in the wagon, chatting amiably, a rabbit jumped across the path in front of the mules. "Hello, Mr. Rabbit," said the old man driving the

wagon. My friend pretended to pay no attention, but, in just a little while, the same thing happened again.

At that point he felt compelled to ask, "Why do you speak to rabbits?"

"There is a legend in these parts," replied the old man, "that rabbits is the spirits of them that has died, and if'n a person ain't kind to 'em, they'll come back to haunt you."

My friend screwed up his courage to protest: "But surely you don't believe such fables, do you?"

"Oh, no," responded the old man, "I ain't believin' it. But takin' time to speak ain't that much trouble."

I don't tell this story to recommend speaking to rabbits, but I think it has much meaning in human relationships. We frequently offend one another through sheer obstinance and pride, because we won't take the time to be courteous and kind.

It is precisely these qualities of kindness and patience which Paul commends in Colossians 3:12-13: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

I am impressed by how much good can be done by acts that are seemingly trivial. I have long made an effort to try to speak to everyone when I assemble with the saints -- even the little children. It may not do them much good. It has helped me to see every individual as a person and make less distinction between those who are natural friends and those that are less close. But, whatever the results, and however, insignificant such courtesies may seem, this much I can tell for sure: "Takin' time to speak ain't much trouble."

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Where Is Your Treasure?

Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

Yesterday (Oct. 19, 1987) was a vivid reminder of how fleeting earthly security can be. The New York Stock Exchange recorded a loss of over 500 points on the Dow Jones Index. The U.S. took military action against Iran in the Persian Gulf. As we watched the evening news, we could not help but think about how insecure our temporal position is upon this planet. Of course, no one knows what lies ahead of us in the days that are to follow. Some are saying all this may get much worse before it gets better.

As Christians, we are aware that our

security must not rest in stocks, bank accounts, and/or international politics. We know that we "brought nothing into this world, and it certain we can carry nothing out". (1 Tim. 6:7). We know that our treasure must be in heaven. (Matt. 6:19-21). We are "persuaded that He is able to keep what (we) have committed to Him until that Day." (2 Tim. 1:12). We are "persuaded that neither death nor life ... nor things present nor things to come ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:38,39)

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