
Words of Truth

Judge Yourself Without Condemning Yourself

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We should all realize that our Lord wants each of us, His disciples, to examine ourselves (I Corinthians 11:28-31 and II Corinthians 13:5). If we find ourselves lacking we should all realize that the Lord expects quick self-correction (Psalms 119:59-60, Lamentations 3:40, and Revelation 2:5). These are things that are often taught and rightfully so. However, as with many subjects, sometimes things are stressed and people tend to go to an extreme rather than having a proper balance.

The following Scriptures tend to scare each of us: *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it... For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.... For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator”* (Matthew 7:13-14, James 2:10, and I Peter 4:17-19).

I do not want to, for even a moment, appear to be downplaying the Scriptures you just read. They stand as they are stated by the Lord. The problem is not with those Scriptures. The problem we are going to address in this study is how someone doesn't properly balance those Scriptures. The Lord did not create a Law, in regard to the New Covenant, that causes people to be lost. The purpose of the Gospel is to save souls (Acts 13:26 and Colossians 1:4-6), not destroy them. The word of our Lord gives life (John 6:63). The word of our Lord gives an inheritance and is edifying (Acts 20:32). Let's consider some things from those truths.

Using The Word Of God Correctly

We are supposed to rightly divide [handle aright] the word of God (II Timothy 2:14-18). We are not supposed to twist the Scriptures to our own destruction (II Peter 3:15-18). With that in mind, consider something. Our Lord said this: *“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”* (I John 5:2-3). The word translated “grievous” means: “weighty, i.e. (fig) burdensome, grave: — grievous, heavy,

weightier" (Strong's # 926). So, I have a question for you. Do you mishandle the word of salvation (Acts 13:26) by making it the word of burden and condemnation to yourself?

There is much the Lord requires of us. However, He does not require too much. We do that to ourselves. The Lord only expects of us, His disciples, what we are reasonably capable of (Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 12:35-48). God is not a fictional slave-master.

Not The Law Of Bondage

We are certainly servants of the Lord and even each other (Romans 6:22, II Corinthians 4:5, and Galatians 5:13). We are wise to be humble and recall that even when we are doing all we can and should, that we are not profitable to the Lord (Luke 17:7-10). However, that does not mean we are servants [slaves] in the general thought of the term. We are willingly obedient to a law that provides joy, peace, hope, salvation, freedom, etc. (Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 6:14-17, Philippians 4:4-9, Colossians 1:23, and I Peter 1:1-12). Read the aforementioned Scriptures (as you should all Scriptures, in every article). Consider those Scriptures. Do not make our service to God into a sense of bondage when the opposite is what the Lord intends (Romans 5:1).

I often think about something when I find myself being a bit hard on myself. I think of another phrase the Lord uses when describing His Law, the New Testament. Notice: *"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed... So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty"* (James 1:25; 2:12). The word translated "liberty" means "freedom" (Strong's #1657).

Our Lord is the provider of freedom, not bondage (John 8:31-32). There is certainly law and order. As disciples of His, we are in His house (Hebrews 3:1-6). He is the rule-maker (Galatians 6:2) and judges based on those rules (John 12:48). However, having infinite wisdom (I John 3:20), the Law of Liberty are rules that free us from sin and bondage rather than putting us in a torturous prison some make the word of God to be.

Conclusion

This lesson does not equally apply to all whom read it. Amongst us disciples of Christ, some get the balance of judging themselves without condemning themselves. Others struggle with this balance. When Paul was writing to the congregations in Galatia, he was writing to people who were going back to distorted portions of the Law of Moses. This is what he wrote to them, through inspiration, and it is what I want to say to those whom overly burden themselves. Consider this: *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"* (Galatians 5:1).