
Words of Truth

I Want To Be The Brother I Never Had

By: Brian A. Yeager

As a young man in the Lord I faced some times in my physical and spiritual life that caused me to fall away from our Lord. I think about those dark days often and hate myself for what I did to my Lord (Job 42:6). I cannot claim, as Paul rightfully did, that my sins were in ignorance (I Timothy 1:12-16). The one thing I do share with Paul is the abundant thanksgiving for God's mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:14-16) as I have confessed (I John 1:9) and repented of those sins (Acts 26:18-20).

I often reflect upon those dark days in efforts to remind myself of where I had been, don't want to ever be again, and to consider how to help others not to go down that same path. The errors of others, though not to be glorified, are good examples to learn from (I Corinthians 10:1-12). In a trip down memory lane I took not long ago, I thought about something that wasn't very helpful in me being restored.

I was part of a congregation in error. The preacher was, and still is, living in sin. The congregation was, and still is, all about keeping up the appearance of faithfulness. I fit into that well. I spent a number of years, completely out of my relationship with God, yet was still viewed as a faithful brother. Yes, from time to time I started to "come to my senses", but never really got there. People knew I was living worldly. Yet, no one called me out. I needed someone to. (Now listen, I am not excusing myself. I was fully accountable for what I did.) I needed a strong brother in Christ to grab me up and take me to task. No one did. As long as I "played church" (foolish talk here), all was well. I always had a heart to do right, but I allowed rebellion to settle in and I allowed myself to foolishly blame others for my sins. Had I died I would've been sent to torment (Luke 16:19-31) and ultimately the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). Brethren, no man in that congregation cared to really see where I was headed spiritually.

Now, I have to make another point here that applies to us all. There was one person that tried to correct me. Her name is Katrina. She was handicapped though, because I was very unreasonable, shamefully, toward her. The most powerful thing she did was continuing her faithfulness even when I found excuses not to (I Peter 3:1-4). She, a babe in Christ at the time, could have done no more than she did. A strong brother though could've given me a strong rebuke and that would've gone far (Proverbs 27:5).

As I think about those days I bring them to the present in examination of myself currently (II Corinthians 13:5) and hopefully for you to reflect upon yourself (Galatians 6:4). If we had a brother or sister here, at Sunrise Acres, erring in the faith what would you do? Would you even know if a brother or sister in Christ here was erring? Now, some are very crafty and it may not be easy or possible to find them out (I Timothy 5:24-25). The question is, are you even looking (Matthew 7:15-20)? Brethren, we have a responsibility to God and to each other to look at one another and correct one another if need be. Are you doing that?

We Have A Brotherly/Sisterly Responsibility Here

Let's just start off this section of our study with letting some Scriptures speak: *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ... Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins... And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh”* (Galatians 6:1-2, James 5:19-20, and Jude 1:22-23).

Sometimes a brother or sister in Christ needs someone to warn them if they are acting unruly (I Thessalonians 5:14). It is not that a person cannot find their way home on their own. The fact is, such is certainly possible (Luke 15:11-24). Let me tell you from experience, it is a hard thing to do. It takes a while. Without guidance, the way home to the Lord is full of one step forward, two steps backward moments. If one of us were to fall, God never intended for us to have to be restored all on our own. The principle of two being better than one applies abundantly here (cf. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

Being able to help a fallen brother or sister requires more than just a Sunday morning relationship. Again, I know this from experience. In my erring days, my “brethren” only knew me on Sunday and Wednesday. Walking in that place of assembly means we all put on our best face, right? I did. To help a brother or sister, for real, you have to know them.

The Relationship That Can Aid In Restoring A Lost Soul

We call one another brothers and sisters in Christ (Acts 11:29, Acts 15:36, Romans 15:14, Romans 16:1, I Corinthians 16:20, and I Timothy 5:1-2). We are supposed to be a spiritual family (Ephesians 3:15). I believe here, we are. I could be wrong though. Thus, I write these things for our consideration individually and collectively.

We see a pattern in the Scriptures wherein brethren knew each other's manner of life (Acts 20:18-20, Acts 26:4, Romans 1:8, I Thessalonians 1:6-7, and II Timothy 3:10). If you'll notice in those Scriptures, it wasn't just locally either. Brethren far and wide were involved in knowing one another. I know such is hard today with so few faithful, but among those few we should know them too as best we can from a distance. I know we are at work in those areas, but again I want to be sure there is no lacking on any part of any one of us!

Back to the point, if we have knowledge of each other's manner of life what will that mean? By knowing the truth and knowing one another you will know when something is amiss (i.e. Galatians 2:11-17). Then what? You can act to help that brother, sister, or group of brethren to be restored.

Conclusion

Brethren, none of us need to get to Heaven by working alone. We have each other in addition to our Lord. Now my mindset is if you need my help, would you please let me be the brother I didn't have when I needed him? Likewise, I promise to call on you if the need arises!