
Words of Truth

The Sin Of Being A Respector Of Persons

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The form [pattern] we are supposed to live according to is the word of God (II Timothy 1:13). God's word is our source for spiritual life (Matthew 4:4 and John 6:63). God's word is where Christians should find guidance (Psalms 119:105, II Timothy 3:16-17, and II Peter 1:3-4). Therefore, when we have things we have to decide upon we have to use the Scriptures to make those decisions. Christians understand that the only permanent, infallible counsel comes from God (Psalms 33:10-11 and Proverbs 21:30).

There are many things that prevent people from seeing and adhering to God's counsel. Family relationships, friendships, etc. are amongst some of the biggest roadblocks that prevent people from making good decisions. In fact, when people think with their hearts they get into trouble (Jeremiah 17:9-10). Jesus warned that our foes will often come from within our own households (Matthew 10:34-37). However, I have known many Christians who have ignored the warnings of God (not just on this matter either). It would seem as though lessons, like that of Absalom's betrayals (II Samuel 13:1-39 and II Samuel 15:1-20:3), were not even in the Bible for those who choose to ignore that family ties can turn to spiritual weakness.

So, what does all of that have to do with the title of this article? Have you noticed that some Christians are inconsistent in how they judge people based on their relationships? For example, a supposed brother or sister in Christ may be highly critical of liars, unless those liars happen to be one of their children. For example, a supposed brother or sister in Christ may be highly critical of fornicators, unless the fornicator happens to be a good friend. For example, a supposed brother or sister in Christ may be highly critical of a thief, unless that thief happens to be a sibling. That, brethren, is judging with preference for someone you know or are related to over someone whom you do not have a carnal relationship with. That is being a respector of persons. Being a respector of persons is WRONG!

We're Not To Be Respecters Of Persons

Notice the following Scriptures: *"Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour... These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment... To have respect of persons is not good: for for a piece of bread that man will transgress... My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not*

God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (Leviticus 19:15, Proverbs 24:23, Proverbs 28:21, and James 2:1-13).

We cannot judge through preferring one over another or by using partiality (Romans 12:16 and I Timothy 5:20-21). We should remove all biases for or against certain types of people. God wants us to judge righteous judgment (John 7:24). Our friends, family members, co-workers, etc. should be examined equally with the same standard as complete strangers. As we addressed in the beginning of this article, that standard should be the word of God. That standard should keep us consistent in all things.

Consistency

Is a drunkard more or less a drunkard because you have a relationship with he or she? Is a murderer more or less a murderer because you know he or she personally? According to God, sin is transgression of His Law (I John 3:4). He is the Judge and His word is the standard of Judgment (John 12:48). One who consumes alcohol is a sinner whether or not they are closely related to you (Proverbs 20:1, Proverbs 21:17, Proverbs 23:20-21, Proverbs 23:29-35, Proverbs 31:4-5, Isaiah 5:11, Isaiah 5:22, Isaiah 28:7-8, Hosea 4:11, Habakkuk 2:15, Romans 13:13, I Corinthians 6:9-10, I Peter 4:1-5, and I Peter 5:8). Being dishonest is a sin regardless of how you feel about someone through your fleshly relationship with them (Proverbs 19:5, Proverbs 19:9, Acts 5:1-10, Ephesians 4:25, and Revelation 21:8).

Now, let us consider an application regarding what consistency demands. It is an application that I have seen many Christians struggle with and some fail in. The Bible says we are to withdraw ourselves from those who walk disorderly (II Thessalonians 3:6). This applies to any Christian who sins (I Corinthians 5:1-13). There is no exception, even if that person is your best friend, part of your family, etc. Additionally, withdrawing from someone not only applies to congregations, but all individual Christians too (I Timothy 6:3-5 and II Timothy 3:1-5). Therefore, if any brother or sister in Christ falls away, we have to withdraw ourselves without being respecters of persons. Would you be consistent in this or would you be bias?

Conclusion

Our society is full of hypocrisy and prejudices. Our minds should be much more spiritually trained than to fall into those carnal sins. The wisdom we have from God is without partiality and hypocrisy (James 3:17). Not being respecters of persons starts with leaving our worldly wisdom behind us and making judgments based on God’s wisdom. If we do that, we will find we’ll always make judgments based on truth rather than our own preferences.