

An Exercise To Discern Both Good and Evil (Hebrews 5:14)

I Know He Is Not Interested

Scenario:

It is the first day of the week. The congregation has assembled as the Lord expects. A man enters in among the saints. He is unknown to you and everyone else. One of the brethren approaches the man and starts talking with him. The two of them eventually head outside apart from where anyone else can see or hear. Soon after that, the brother walks back in. The whole encounter lasts about five minutes.

Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:

One of the brethren asks the brother who conversed with the “visitor” about what happened. The brother who conversed with the visitor says: “I spoke with the man. I know he is not interested in the truth. He told me that he was here to accept Jesus as his Savior and to get a Heavenly blessing. I told him that Jesus is the Savior whether he accepts Him or not. He didn’t understand. So, I took him outside and asked him if he was willing to hear the truth. He said, he knew enough to know that Jesus is his Savior. I told him, we couldn’t be wasting our time on someone who wasn’t looking for the truth.”

A Later Statement Is Made:

Several brethren asked: “How do you know he wasn’t looking for the truth?” He replied: “Go read Matthew 7:6. That’s all I have to say.”

For Discussion: What do you see in those statements?

- Since the first century, the Lord’s people have always assembled together on the first day of the week (**Acts 20:7** and **I Corinthians 16:1-4**).
- The Lord expects each and every member not to forsake any time the saints assemble together (**Hebrews 10:23-25**).
- “As the Lord expects” tells us that all the actions associated with that assembly are rooted in God’s instructions (**Matthew 28:20**, **Colossians 1:10**, **I Thessalonians 4:1-2**, and **II Timothy 3:14-17**).
- There are times wherein we may not know someone who assembles with us. That person could be an unbeliever (**I Corinthians 14:23**).
- It is not necessarily a problem that a discussion be taken to a place wherein it can be held privately (**Acts 18:24-28**).
- Teaching can be done privately or publicly (**Acts 20:20**).

Regarding the Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:

- Jesus came into the world to save the lost (**Luke 19:1-10**). He wants all men to be saved (**I Timothy 2:4-6** and **II Peter 3:9**). Of course, brethren who are interested in the lost being saved (**Proverbs 11:30**) will be interested in what happened since the visitor does not return inside.

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- There are times wherein we can see that people are not interested in the truth (**Acts 13:44-46**). Sometimes people just don't want the truth (**Hosea 4:6**, **Zechariah 7:8-13**, and **Matthew 10:14-15**). Sometimes people ask certain questions that show an unwillingness to be converted (**Mark 12:18-27**, **II Timothy 2:23**, and **Titus 3:9-11**). Sometimes people just outright reject the truth (**Jeremiah 6:15-19** and **Mark 7:1-13**).
- As this brother reports about the conversation though, there are some things of concern. First off, if anyone decides to take on the role of being a teacher, a guide to lost souls; that person should heavily consider the potential consequences of not doing such correctly (**Matthew 15:14** and **James 3:1**).
- Today, the language of "accepting Jesus as a person's Savior" is common as are many false doctrines associated with that language. Today, we have to understand that teaching is going to include unteaching. A person who desires to teach the lost has to have some ability to be longsuffering [forbearing] enough to guide someone out of confusion and false doctrine (**II Corinthians 6:1-13**, **II Timothy 2:24-26**, and **II Timothy 4:1-5**). Learn from our Lord that longsuffering leads to the salvation of the lost (**II Peter 3:15**).
 - Consider Jesus working with the twelve. How many times did He have to forbear with their lack of faith and their slowness in conversion (**Matthew 6:30**, **Matthew 8:23-27**, **Matthew 14:22-33**, **Matthew 16:1-23**, **Matthew 17:14-21**, **Matthew 28:16-17**, **Mark 9:30-32**, **Luke 22:32-33**, **John 20:24-29**, etc.)?
 - How many people would continue to try teaching the Corinthians after hearing they were carnally minded (**I Corinthians 3:1-3**)? Yet, Paul sent men to preach there (**I Corinthians 4:17** and **II Corinthians 12:18**), continued to write them, and purposed to come to them himself even though they mistreated him in various ways (**II Corinthians 12:14-15**).
 - Think of those slow to grow (**Hebrews 5:11-6:3**).
 - When it comes to the lost, Jesus was not sent but the lost sheep of Israel (**Matthew 15:21-28**). Yet, in the afore referenced account and in another He talked to Samaritans (**John 4:1-43**).
 - Remember the value of one lost soul (**Luke 15:1-32**).
 - One must measure longsuffering correctly. You cannot compromise the truth and have erring fellowship with those who will not repent (**Ephesians 5:6-11**).
See: https://www.wordsoftruth.net/LongsufferingANDMilitant_2019.pdf
- How could one take a statement like "I know enough to know that Jesus is my Savior" to mean a person is a lost cause? It is a true statement (**John 1:29** and **I John 4:14**). Return to an earlier reference where the Samaritans said something similar to this man (**John 4:42**).
- We have already seen that unbelievers can be in the assembly of the saints. If they are not causing problems, why would anyone seek to forbid them from hearing and observing the truth? Should we hide the way from people (**Matthew 5:14-16**)?
- Teaching lost souls is no waste of time. How absurdly stupid. For what reason did Jesus come into this world (**Matthew 18:11**, **Luke 5:27-32**, and **I Timothy 1:13-16**)?
- God wants people to turn from their sins (**Ezekiel 18:23**; **18:31-32**). In a similar manner as Paul, we can help sinners do that (**Acts 26:18-20**).

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Regarding the Later Statement That Is Made From Our Scenario:

- Great question: “How do you know he wasn’t looking for the truth?” From the report given, there is no way he knew that. If he did, he withheld the information that would declare that. He is judging incorrectly (**John 7:24**).
- Now, there is a problem. The reply of this “brother” is very troubling. What makes the man a dog? Is it that he wanted a blessing and knew Jesus was His Savior? What if he understood the blessing to be eternal life (**Galatians 3:14**)? Is that something he should not have been looking for?
- As brethren, we should be forbearing with one another (**Ephesians 4:1-3** and **Colossians 3:12-15**). This quick, inexplicable answer does not show forth love or forbearance. If this brother knows something everyone else is ignorant to, he should reveal it and teach it (see earlier points about teaching).
- This scenario should give us all plenty to think about. There are times to stop trying to teach (**Matthew 10:1-14**, **Acts 13:43-51**, and **Titus 3:9-11**). We have to use the Scriptures correctly to determine those times. Do you want to be guilty of casting off someone too soon? If you don’t know how to judge these things, don’t seek to teach the lost. Certainly, don’t take someone aside without any help.
- Consider what Jesus said to the scribes, Pharisees, and lawyers: *“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in... Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered”* (**Matthew 23:13** and **Luke 11:52**).