

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ.

1Corinthians 3:1

Store In My Heart

1Corinthians 3:2-3

I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

Paul teaches a basic principle here that we must be careful we do not overlook. Paul states that the Corinthian's inability to receive solid food was caused by their focus on fleshly attitudes. Since they were walking and thinking like 'mere' men, they could not accept the teaching of God. We are often hindered by similar failings. We must never think of God or His commands in the limits of human ideas. We do not, indeed cannot, see what God uses to decide what is best for us. We are limited by our human weakness. We need to just let God guide.



Perilous Times

Lawrence Kelly

Living in a time of declining morals presents Christians with a variety of challenges. The most obvious being that we simply accommodate ourselves to the corruption around us. This is the problem of flexible standards. Whatever the world approves we approve. The only real difference between the accommodating believer and the worldling is that the former maintains a sense of self-respect by lagging behind a few steps and grumbling about how bad things are getting. However, his grumbling doesn't prevent him from gradually adapting to the new standards. He stays in the shallow end of the immorality pool, congratulating himself on knowing how to splash around without getting in over his head. But, the pool is still full of kids with weak bladders, and they don't make enough chlorine to keep the mess they are swimming in fit for Christian contact.

Examples of this problem are embarrassingly available among modern Christians. The holy name of God is thrown around and used for mere exclamatory purposes. The immodest fashion standards set by Paris and New York are preferred to the standards found in Scripture. Like the worldly, we spend what we don't have, to buy what we don't need, in order to impress people we don't know until we're up to our eyeballs in debt. We learn the world's lesson to look out for number one and disregard the widow, the orphan, the neighbor across the street who just lost his job. We lower our entertainment standards. We falsify our resume. We alter our sexual standards. We lapse into questionable business practices. There is nothing the world can do, that Christians can't find a way to mimic.

One question that we should be asking is, "How did we get to the point where we could so easily accommodate these new standards?" Ironically, the answer is found in the way many social conservatives are trying to fight the encroaching immorality. The rallying cry over the past few years has been the need to return to "traditional values." We want traditional marriage, not same sex marriage. The impotence of this phrase is exposed with one little word -- why? If marriage is defined by tradition, by mere social custom, then why not change the tradition? If people defined marriage as a covenant between a man and woman a couple hundred years ago, then why can't people define marriage as a covenant between two men, or three or six for that matter, today?

If we are thinking in terms of an infinitely flexible standard that changes with the times, then there is no reason why we should not move with the times. The fact that many Christians do go with the flow, is evidence that they are thinking of

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For Our Information

Remember our brethren who are in isolation at this time. They need our calls and our prayers.

Some are still dealing with health issues that have nothing to do with the virus, but need to stay isolated because of the virus.

Dan will be at the building reviewing 1Corinthians 1-3 at regular mid-week assembly time this week. Join us if you feel comfortable.

Pray for safety, courage & healing.

morals in terms of human social convention rather than God's law. Marriage between two men is unacceptable, not because the founding fathers thought of marriage in terms of a man and a woman, but because God's Word clearly sets forth the principle of one woman for one man for life. Though many Christians see this regarding marriage, they do not make the connection with other moral issues.

Sexual purity, honesty, honoring our parents, revering God's name, showing mercy, shunning false witnesses, etc. are non-negotiable items in God's economy. The particular applications of these principles will manifest themselves in different ways depending on time and place, but the basic principles are unchanging.

We have noted that living in a time of declining morals presents Christians with a variety of challenges. The most obvious being that we simply accommodate ourselves to the corruption around us. However the most obvious dangers confronting us may not be the most dangerous.

Dumbing down God's laws in order to splash around in the pool of immorality is a bad business. But more subtle and equally damning is the tendency to uphold a veneer of high standards without building on the foundation of the gospel itself.

A lot of people are attracted to the high standards of the Bible, for unbiblical reasons. Having high standards does two things for this kind of person. It provides them with a tidy respectable code to follow and it makes them reputable in the community. They like being respectable, tidy minded people just like some others like being grungy and a little wild. They go to church every Sunday for the same reason the other people ride their chopper over to Hooters every Sunday -- it suits them. It fits the mage they like to portray.

When a person tries to uphold high standards for these kinds of reasons it is only a matter of time before they implode. When Paul warned the Galatians about the works of the flesh, he gives them a notorious list of vile sins (Gal. 5:19-21). He warns them that this is the kind of behavior they are heading for. The amazing thing is how they were heading there. The problem in Galatia was not one of lowering their standards, but of trying to uphold high standards for the wrong reasons. Teachers had told them that Paul's standards were too low and incomplete. They said that to truly become acceptable to God they were going to have to do more than Paul had required when he taught them the gospel. Paul quickly identified the root problem as the desire for respectability and warns them that if they keep it up they are going to end up in the ditch of flesh.

But how can trying to be good and uphold high standards end up in such a train wreck? In order to get this we must understand that the thing the flesh wants most is respectability. It wants to retain its pride. Therefore if your religion has as its starting point something that flatters the flesh then how can it end anywhere but in the indulgence of other fleshly desires? If you begin, in the flesh, you will walk in the flesh. This is why it shouldn't be surprising when a hyper-legalist, winds up running off with one of the deacon's wives.

So, do we need to have low standards? No, but consider two things: We need to make sure that our standards are God's standards and not law we've manufactured to show our self holier than others. Second, we MUST realize that His standards are not about winning His favor, but are the outgrowth of love and loyalty to Him who has and continues to lavish us with a tsunami of grace. This is why the false approach to high moral standards must be rejected. It caters to the flesh. Traditional values for the sake of respectability only inflame the lusts of the heart. Religiously kills. Common decency is a whitewashed tomb.



We seek only to serve God according to His Will!