

# The Old Paths

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## “We Or They?”

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**W**hen we use particular words and phrases, they carry with them certain meanings. Such is the case when we use the words, “we” and “they.” At times, “we” implies familiarity, kinship, closeness, or oneness. “They” would imply a separation (real or imagined), a situation in which the one speaking is not included, or is considered an outsider. In other words, “we” implies that the one speaking was a participant in an activity, while “they” implies that the one speaking was not included in the activity (though he may have observed it).

For example, after the fall of 2001, it is still not uncommon to hear people who live in areas other than New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania speak of how “we” were attacked by the Muslim terrorists. We all feel a kinship with our countrymen even though we do not live in those areas. Likewise, when we watch a ball game, and our favorite team wins, don’t we often say, “We won the game!”? In reality, all “we” did was watch (from our seats, or on TV). We feel a kinship with those who actually played the game.

This article is not intended to be a grammar lesson. However, I stress the points about “we” and “they” to ask a spiritual question. “What is our attitude toward this church?” Is our attitude one of “we” or “they”?

### A Few Questions:

1. This church supports men in various parts of this country/world who are preaching the gospel. Do I tell folks, “We financially support preachers in various places.” or, “They financially support preachers in various places.”?

2. Is it “we” or “they” who have two week-long radio programs? Is it “we” or “they” who have a website? TV shows? Etc.?

3. Do “we” have a good number of song leaders, or do “they” have a good number of song leaders?

4. Do “we” have a good group of young people, or do “they” have a good group of young people?

Yes, the terms “we” and “they” make a great difference when we put them in sentences such as the above, don’t they? Our congregation here is not made up of one or two, but is composed of all of us! Let us learn and learn well that “we” are in this together! “We” need to be united in love, and working toward a common goal (Phil. 3:13-14). “We” need to be likeminded (Phil. 2:2). The only way this will be accomplished is when “we” are determined to follow all and only what the Bible says (Phil. 1:27).

Some may feel left out at times because they are not taking a public role, or perhaps they are not involved in every activity in which they would like to be involved. Please do not sell yourself short.

Just because I didn’t have a public part to play in worship services, does not mean I am not needed! Often, the greatest work is that which is done “behind the scenes.” Not merely weekly, but daily, I can pray for my brethren (I Tim. 2:1; I Thess. 5:17). I can encourage and exhort them daily by my words and actions to do better and to grow in the Lord. Then, I can be HAPPY when they do succeed! (Eph. 4:29; Matt. 7:12; Rom. 12:9; etc.)

Christ said, *“The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. And whoever one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward”* (Matt. 10:41-42). In other words, if I will help my brethren who are doing their best for the Lord, and help them because they are serving God, then God is aware of this, and will reward me accordingly! *“For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do”* (Heb. 6:10).

### **Conclusion**

Let all of us realize that we are in this together! Let us not exhibit an “us” versus “them” mentality in the Lord’s body. Let us not have the attitude which says, “They do so-and-so...”. Let us realize that in this congregation, we are one. Just because I may not be an “eye” or an “ear” does not mean I am not a part of this body (I Cor. 12:12-27)! You and I are participants, not spectators in the work here at Caneyville! Therefore, let us get to work. Let us be fired up, ready to do the Lord’s work whenever and wherever we can.

# How Deep Is Your Commitment?

Aric Russell, Mooresville, IN

**A**s most of you know, the Winter Olympics are wrapping up today. In the last few weeks there has been a lot of talk about the Olympic athletes, especially concerning their dedication and commitment. There has been much discussion about how hard they have trained and how they have completely dedicated their lives to their sport to represent their country on the biggest stage. Their dedication, their commitment, is very impressive to say the least. Now, I would like to ask the question, how committed are YOU to God? We know what commitment is. It is: "the state of being bound—emotionally, intellectually, or both — to a particular person or course of action." Commitment starts with a choice (ideally, thoughtfully made and aligned with virtuous purpose) and is sustained by dedication and perseverance. Commitment is active. It is expressed and realized in our thoughts and actions. So again, are YOU committed to God?

We need to first realize and understand that commitment is demanded by God. We are told to seek first the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33). When Christ said this, He did not mean for us to only seek after the Kingdom when we want to, but, Christ meant for us to seek after Him at all times. We are also told to set our minds on things above (Col. 3:2). Whatever we may be doing, we have to remember God. Are the things which we are doing bringing glory to God? Is He happy with how we are acting? Whether it is at work, or school, or in other areas of our

lives, we have to remember to do all to glorify our Father in Heaven.

We understand that it is a commandment of God, but how hard can being committed to Him be? In answer to this, remember that we have to expect adversity when being committed to the Lord. We are told in 2 Timothy 3:12 that *"all who desire to be godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."* Christ has never promised that if we commit to Him that our life will be a walk in the park. People will tempt us and people will make fun of us for our beliefs. But, it is also important to remember 1 Corinthians 10:13. Paul said, *"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."* If we remember God and keep our faith when we are tested, we will prevail. In the process, we will make ourselves stronger Christians.

We must also remember that facing adversity does not have to be a bad thing. Recall back to what James 1:2-4 says: *"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you*

*may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."* We are to use these trials, these temptations as tools to build on our faith. We know that by suffering we will also bring glory to God (1 Pet. 4:12-14).

So, how does your spiritual commitment compare to folks' earthly commitments? Are we as committed to God as the Olympic athletes are to their sport and country? Would we face trials and temptations willingly to strengthen our faith or would we hide and turn away from God when our faith is tested? Those athletes that made it to the Olympics had to climb and fight their way to the top. They earned their spots and I cannot imagine a single one of them telling you their journey was easy; but I am sure they would all tell you their journey was worth it. It is the same for us. God has told us, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (Heb. 13:5). God will always be with us if we keep Him first in our lives. Our commitment to God will not always be easy, but it will be worth it.

### Editor's Note:

Brother Russell and his family are here today. Make sure and tell him what a good job he did in this writing. He has given us much to consider as we examine ourselves (II Cor. 13:5).

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