

The Old Paths

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“All Things Are Relative”

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Have we heard folks justify their behavior based on the thinking that all actions, and even our morality itself is “relative”? What did they mean? Put simply, they are trying to say that there are no objective standards in this life, and that the only standard for right and wrong is the standard we personally establish in our lives. In other words, something may be wrong by my moral standards, but right by your standards, and we are all supposed to accept each other’s opinions as valid. It is from this thinking that we hear phrases like: “your truth,” “my truth,” or “your reality” and “my reality”.

This type of thinking has had an adverse effect on the Lord’s church as well. I have heard of some brethren saying they are “strong enough” to engage in some questionable behavior, while others are not. Please understand, the Bible addresses some Christians as being “strong” and “weak” (Rom. 14). However, what is under consideration are those things that are matters of personal liberty where “there is nothing unclean of itself all things indeed are pure” (Rom. 14:14, 20).

Thus, the things that are mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21, I Corinthians 6:9-11, and other places are not included in the discussion found in Romans 14. Yet, when brethren try to justify their ac-

tions, saying they are “strong” and others are “weak”, they are often trying to justify actions which would fall into Galatians 5 or I Corinthians 6, rather than Romans 14.

Let us look at the relative reasoning some folks use in justifying sinful behavior and contrast this with the true standard, the Bible (I Pet. 4:11; Prov. 22:28).

Some Condone In The Home What They Condemn In Public.

Some today will engage in sinful actions, and justify the actions by saying, “It was done in our home.” For example, people watching movies with sexual content (see Matt. 5:28), foul language (see Eph. 5:3-4), graphic violence, etc., (see Ps. 101:3) have been heard to justify this by saying, “This was at home,” or, “We waited until the children went to bed to watch it.”

To this, I can only respond the way the apostle Paul did: “*You then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you...”*” (Rom. 2:21-24).

How many have shown themselves to be the wrong example toward others in the world because they condoned things in the home that they condemned in public? Do we leave people with the impression that there are no absolutes, or that there are “double-standards”?

“Look At All The Good Accomplished.”

When Satan finds an excuse that is effective, he continues to use it! It is this way with the excuse, “Look at all the good accomplished.” This excuse has been used in the past to justify the practice of church-supported orphan’s homes, and other unauthorized church organizations. It is still used today by people to justify their sinful behavior.

To give us an idea of how old this excuse is, do some study in the book of Romans. We find in Romans that there were some who thought that since they had been saved from sin by the grace of God, then they could continue to sin and receive even more grace (Rom. 6:1-2). Of course, this was not true at all. Others accused the apostle Paul of saying, “*Let us do evil that good may come*” (Rom. 3:8). He adamantly denied this charge!

I have heard folks justify some of the basest behavior because of some supposed “good message” that can come from it. This is wrong! “Relative” thinking is drawing us farther away from God and closer to Satan! Do we not understand that we could justify any sin we like, whether it be adultery, murder, stealing, etc., when we base these actions on the relative reasoning, “Look at the good that can be accomplished”.

“I Don’t See Anything Wrong With It.”

How many false ideas and false doctrines have been justified through this statement? Just because you or I do not see anything “wrong” with a situation or practice does not make it right!

Simply put, it really doesn’t matter whether or not “I” see anything wrong with it. The true test of right and wrong is determined by “*What saith the scripture?*” (Rom. 4:3). God’s word has been given to us for our learning. It provides us with all we need to live a godly and peaceful life in the sight of God (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:3). When we rely upon our own wisdom and understanding, this is when problems arise personally, in the home, at work, in the church, etc. Yet, isn’t this what “relative” thinking is? It is a choice or choices men make based upon their experience and wisdom rather than by God’s word! How truly foolish one is who justifies his behavior in any of the ways we have listed in this article!

The reasoning, “I do not see anything wrong with it” does nothing but soothe the consciences of those folks who are engaged in sinful practices.

What Can We Do?

Having studied some of the spiritual problems we face when people rationalize behavior based upon relative thinking, what can we do to overcome this problem?

First, resolve to only speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent (I Pet. 4:11). Secondly, remember Jesus’ example was left for us to follow. His example covers all

facets of life (Col. 3:17; I Pet. 2:21-22). Therefore, follow Him!

Let us determine to think on things that are pure, holy, and right (Phil. 4:8-9; Matt. 15:18-20). Our problem is that we have become desensitized to the sins around us (I Tim. 4:1-2). Once we become “sensitive” again, we will not allow ourselves to be in situations conducive to sin (Dan. 1:8). When the time comes that we slip up (I Jn. 1:9), we will not try to justify our actions by making excuses for sins; but will humbly repent and ask God for forgiveness (Acts 8:22). Let us think on the things that are virtuous and worthy of God’s praise; not the things that are hidden and unworthy of God’s praise.

What can we do? We can show ourselves to be the right examples to those around us (Matt. 5:14-16). Parents, show your children how to act (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21). Be the proper role model for them. Let them see how a Christian acts and presents himself to the world.

Yes, there are many things we can do to combat the problems associated with relative thinking. The question is: Will we do it?

Conclusion

Let us not be unwise, but understand God’s will (Eph. 5:17). Let us understand that God’s word is absolute and I must live by His word alone (Jn. 17:17). Let us beware of Satan, who, “*as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” (I Pet. 5:8).

The Bible teaches us that we are to be holy as God is holy (Matt. 5:48; I Pet. 1:15-16). How can we ever be like this when we are excusing our behavior with relative reasoning? Think carefully about this. Let us stop falling for Satan’s lies. Bible truth is objective. It is concrete. Therefore, let us listen and obey His word and encourage others to do the same. Heaven awaits us when we do (Rev. 22:14)!

It is not our job to make the message acceptable, but to make it available ... not to make them like it, but to be sure that they get it.
- Anon.

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