

The Old Paths

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“Bruce Jenner”

Jarrod Jacobs

I know that most of our population is aware of Bruce Jenner’s recent “transformation.” The man who was considered an American “hero” for winning and breaking records at the 1976 Olympics, has decided to mutilate his body and become a woman — at least on the exterior. In such a transformation, there were folks who lauded him as a “hero” for taking hormones and having extensive plastic surgery which altered his physical appearance. There is an element of our country who now looks upon him as a “hero” because he is supposedly being “true” to himself. In fact, he claims that he has been a woman for some years. What has happened to Bruce Jenner? What has happened to us as a nation when many people wish to call the mutilation of one’s body “heroism”?

Changing The Body Does Not Change Who You Are

To mutilate one’s body through hormones and surgery may cause folks to stop and stare. It might make a “media buzz.” Yet, it does not change who you really are. Remember that though he changed the outward appearance, he can do nothing about his DNA, his genes, etc. Those were things established by God, and cannot be changed! God is still involved in the process of creating life. David declared this in Psalm 139:13-16. Bruce Jenner’s mutilation, while shocking, is not

the actual problem he faces. Rather, it is the symptom of a deeper problem that all men face.

Sin

Put simply, what has happened to Bruce Jenner is what has happened to all mankind — sin (Rom. 3:23). There is a reason that Paul wrote, *“evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived”* (II Tim. 3:13). This is because when we refuse to repent, and choose to live in sin, sin has no natural stopping place! Therefore, the sins tolerated a generation ago pale in comparison with what is tolerated now. Sin causes this moral and spiritual descent!

I think of the sins named in Romans 1; II Timothy 3; etc., and realize that we are witnessing much of what the apostle described! Yes, other generations have lived through it (Ecc. 1:10-11). Yes, other generations faced much worse at times (Gen. 13-19). Now, it is our turn. What are we going to do? Will we continue to descend, or will we turn to the Lord for salvation?

Is The Bible Our Guide?

God’s word gives us *“all things that pertain to life and godliness”* (II Pet. 1:3). Since this is so, God gives us the answer to our spiritual problems. Therefore, we must ask ourselves honestly whether or not the Bible guides us.

The Bible says our bodies belong to God (I Cor. 6:19-20). Yet, Bruce Jenner is acting as if his body is his own to change and rear-

range as he pleases!

In contrast, a Christian is interested in following what God says at all times (Col. 3:17). This is a changed person from the inside, not merely the outside (Rom. 12:1-2)! This is one God calls a *“new creature”* (II Cor. 5:17)! The changes that God focuses on are spiritual in nature!

On a larger scale, please consider our society. As we continue to push God out of more areas of our lives, then sinful activities increase and become more popular. Sinful activities become the “norm,” “accepted,” and yes, even “heroic” at times! Such actions remind me of the problem Isaiah faced when he said: *“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight”* (Isa. 5:20-21). Don’t we see this same thing today? (Jer. 10:23)

The Answer Is Christ!

Bruce Jenner’s problem is that he is lost in sin (Rom. 3:23; Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 6:23). Only Christ can fill this need (Lk. 19:10). In fact, humanity’s problem is that we have rejected Christ, our Savior, the only One who can fill the spiritual needs we have!

When we turn to the Lord and allow His word to guide us, we will know what to do to be saved from sin (Acts 22:16). We can stop the “tailspin” in which sin has placed us! Sin has no “natural” stopping place, but with Christ, we can stop! We can even reverse course and walk the *“strait and narrow way”* that *“leads to life”* (Matt. 7:13-14).

Even now, Bruce Jenner can be forgiven by Christ (Acts 2:38; II Cor. 6:2). So can we all (Heb. 3:7-8; Mk. 16:16)!

Lessons From Esther

Aric Russell

The book of Esther contains great lessons about how we should be living, conducting ourselves on the job, facing opposition, facing success, and looking ahead confidently to the future. Most importantly, it best shows the providence of God, and how He works in the perfect way and the perfect timing to accomplish His purposes. Notice a few lessons we learn from the book of Esther.

The first lesson is that God has a plan for our lives. Mordecai said it best when he said, *“For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”* (Esther 4:14). However, Mordecai was clear when he said to Esther that she could or could not be the one who saved the people. God will use you only if you're willing, or He will find someone else.

The second lesson we learn from Esther is that we must stand with courage. Esther 4:16 says, *“Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!”* Esther was willing to die to save her people. Sometimes we must stand in courage, even when it is not popular to do so, and risk it all.

Another lesson we learn from Esther is that God demands obedience. Esther's obedience saved God's people from annihilation. The reality is that Esther didn't know what would happen when she approached the king. She acted in obedience and by doing so she saved a nation and received the best. We must learn that we too must be obedient to God to receive the best gift available, eternal life (Rev. 2:10).

Finally, we learn that God uses everything and everybody for His divine purpose. No part of our lives is untouched. God is in control of every aspect, whether we want Him to be or not, and there is nothing that is not subject to Him. Hebrews 2:8 says, *“You have put all things in subjection under his feet.”* For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. Now, we do not yet see all things put under Him. The best thing we can do for our lives is to search for and surrender to His will.

“Not all educated people are intelligent.” - R.L. Whiteside

“Give Me The Truth”

Bill Crews

If you are my friend, if you are concerned about my soul, give me the truth. Do not flatter me. Do not praise my virtues while remaining silent about my vices. Do not fear the truth will offend me. Do not treasure our friendship, our friendly relations, above my salvation. Do not think that by ignoring my sins, you can help me. Do not think that being blind to my sins will prove you charitable. However I may react to it, whatever may be my attitude toward you after you have done it, **GIVE ME THE TRUTH!**

For the truth, and only the truth, can make me free from the shackles of sin, strengthen me in the pathway of righteousness and lead me to the joys of heaven. If I am wavering, weak, lukewarm, indifferent, neglectful; if I have been overtaken in a trespass; if I have been drawn into the pleasures of the world; if I have left my first love; if I have been led astray by error, or, if I have done none of the these things, but simply need to grow in knowledge and then be edified, **GIVE ME THE TRUTH!**

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