

# WHERE ARE WE HEADED? (4)

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

In the previous articles we have described where God's people should be with reference to their attitude toward his word and its authority. We have also traced a trend of losing respect for the Bible. In this, the final article in this series, we want to consider some of the causes behind our lack of respect for the word.

1. **IGNORANCE.** Men err when they do not know the word of God (Matt. 22:39). Israel of old was carried into captivity due to their ignorance of God and his word (Hosea 4:6; Isa. 5:13). When we fail to study and grow in knowledge (2Pet. 3:18), we make ourselves ripe for apostasy. Without a knowledge of God's word, our faith is weakened and our ability to distinguish between truth and error or right and wrong is greatly diminished.

Many who are second, third, or fourth generation Christians assume that their children will carry on in the same fashion the family has for generations before and therefore fail to diligently teach their children. When children are not taught, we raise up a generation that knows not God (Jud.2:10).

2. **PROSPERITY.** God warned Israel that when they entered into the land of Canaan, into cities they didn't build, into house full of things they did not fill, drink from wells they didn't dig and eat from vineyards they did not plant, to "beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Deu. 6:10-12).

The principle applies today. When we prosper as well as most Americans have, there is a tendency to forget about God. We can cry hard times if we want to, but most of us are faring pretty well. Evidence? Consider the tractor-trailers that cover the highways. They are full of goods that we are buying. Go to a real nice restaurant on a week-end and you will have to wait twenty minutes to an hour to be seated. All of this says that some one has money to spend.

Don't misunderstand. There is no sin in prosperity. There is nothing inherently wrong in being wealthy. However, the danger is that we forget about spiritual things when we have so many material things.

Those who sell Bibles tell me when the economy is up Bible sales are down and when the economy is down Bible sales are up. Hummm...something to think about.

3. ***THE INFLUENCE OF THE WORLD.*** The world around us has a greater impact on us than we may be willing to admit. The pressure is on to be more like those around us or stand out as some kind of odd ball. Israel was influenced by the fact that other nations had a king (1 Sam. 8:5f). Furthermore, the heathens in the land of Canaan swayed God's people with idolatry.

As the world continues to show disrespect for God and his word, we must resist the temptation to be conformed to its mold (Rom. 12.1-2).

4. ***SOME HAVE LEARNED THE PRINCIPLE BUT NOT THE APPLICATION, WHILE OTHERS HAVE LEARNED THE APPLICATION BUT NOT THE PRINCIPLE.*** I refer to the principle and application of Bible authority. Some have learned the principle of the need for Bible authority and how it is to be established. However, they may not see how that principle applies to a particular issue. In the days of the battle over institutionalism there were some brethren who supported the institutional concept who knew the principle of Bible authority as well as anyone. They simply failed to apply it to the question of the day. Among us today there are brethren who preach and teach the principle of Bible authority as well or better than anyone, but cannot see that that principle applies to questions like divorce and remarriage. We are hearing arguments that appeal to the silence of the Scriptures as permission.

On the other hand some have learned the application, but not the principle. I am convinced that a few came out of the institutional battle only learning the application or conclusion: churches sending money to orphan's home is wrong, Yet, they didn't learn why that was true. Without understanding the principle behind that conclusion, one is not in a position to make proper application on other questions. That again, can account for some of the problems we are having on divorce and remarriage and other issues.

To be prepared and prevent apostasy we must learn the principle of Bible authority

and how it is to be applied.

**5. A *DESIRE TO APPEASE OTHERS AND BE LIKED*.** None of us like to believe or practice anything that causes others to dislike us or think we are strange. So there is a temptation to change our concepts little by little. Then in time, we shift our practice. Thus, with some change (compromise) we are made a little more attractive to those around us.

Couple with that the pressure that comes from those who say we must change if the church is to survive. They tell us that our traditional beliefs and practices alienate when we need to do more to unite.

## **CONCLUSION**

May each one of us honestly compare where we ought to be with where we are and where we are headed. When such an examination is done many will admit that there is a difference. For the past few years I have felt conscience bound to preach this material in every meeting where I have preached. The reaction I am getting is that I have hit the nail on the head. In some places I have been told, "You are right! That is going on right here!"

The sad part of all this is that we will be judged by the every book for which we are losing respect (John 12:48)

May the soldiers of Christ arise and fight the good fight and stand firm against the liberal thinking of today.

As stated in the previous bulletins, these articles are from the Guardian of Truth 1995, by our beloved brother Donnie Rader. I hope this series has given us all some things to think and pray about.