



The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 11

March 2, 2025

No. 9

“Convinced We Are Right, But...”

By Mark W. White

There are many things we know with certainty (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3) and the Lord does not intend for us to go through life unsure of what to truly believe. On the other hand, there is the possibility we feel certain about some things about which we could be wrong.

It is not necessary to be unsure about everything, but it is also foolish to convince ourselves we are always right about everything. We want to be right, but we can be wrong. Humility and reality demands that we be willing to listen to another viewpoint at times, and decide whether to reaffirm what we believe, or to make a change in belief where honesty leads us. It's hard to do.

But someone says, “Isn't this attitude unsettling? Why must I constantly reexamine my thinking and validate my convictions?” Because faith is a growth process. It is living, not dead. The apostle Peter said we should always be ready to make a defense of the hope that is in us, “with gentleness and reverence” (1 Peter 3:15, NASB). Our convictions will be challenged and we must know how to answer.

One of the most sobering passages in the Bible is found at the end of Matthew 7. Jesus pleaded with His disciples to “Enter by the narrow gate,” because “many” will miss it and “go in” the wide gate “by” the broad way to destruction (7:13). Jesus used that same word—“many” nine verses later to reveal what would happen at the judgment: “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (Matthew 7:22-23).

These people, convinced they were right, marched right into eternity without the Lord! We must realize that we too could be in that crowd so convinced they were right, but just as wrong as could be! When Dr. Luke wrote his books, he depended on expert testimony from eyewitnesses and the Holy Spirit's guidance to word his position. He didn't just hope he was right on his own. “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” (Proverbs 14:12).
Meek Street Bulletin, Corinth, MS

The Devil's Most Useful Tool

by Kyle Campbell

It was once announced that the Devil was going out of business and would offer all his tools for sale to whoever would pay his price. On the night of the sale, they were all attractively displayed. Malice, hatred, lust, envy, and all the other implements of evil were spread out, each marked with its price. Apart from the rest lay a harmless looking wedge-shaped tool, extremely worn and higher in price than any of the others.

Someone asked the Devil what it was. “That is discouragement,” he replied. “Why do you have it priced so high?” “Because,” the Devil said, “It's the most useful tool I own. With it, I can pry open and get inside a man's conscience when I couldn't get near him with any of the others. Once inside, I can use him in whatever way suits me best. It's so worn because I use it with nearly everyone. Very few people know that it belongs to me.”

The Devil's price for discouragement was so high that it was never sold. He still owns it and uses it to this day. But here's three people who teach us three ways of dealing with the struggles of discouragement.

First, from Moses we learn that we should tell God our feelings in prayer (Numbers 11:11-15). Moses poured out his feelings to God. God's answer to Moses' prayer was to give him 70 elders to assist him in managing the affairs of the camp. Moses was a great leader and a spiritual giant, but even he could do only so much.

Second, from Job we learn that when everything seems to be going wrong, we can remember that God never loses control, that God has reasons for what He allows, and that God can change circumstances when the right time comes (Job 1:12; 2:6; 42:10-17).

Third, from Elijah we learn that we often make despondency worse by dwelling on the negative and imagining that events in our lives are worse than they are. His repeated complaint to God seems to be all he was thinking about (1 Kings 19:10, 14). He forgot that life can seem worse than it really is. He said, "I only am left." This dejected attitude has been called "The Elijah Complex." He also forgot that good can be happening that he didn't know about (1 Kings 19:18; cp. Psalm 18:21; Isaiah 38:3).

Satan does incredible damage to the hearts of Christians with discouragement. But the Bible is "true to life" and is as relevant to our modern problems as it was for people who lived long ago. This is one way God helps us through the Scriptures: by not only picturing the triumphant moments in lives of great men and women, but also how people of faith endure dark times of despondency.

The help God reserves for those going through discouraging times is for those who have turned to Him, not for those who have turned their backs against Him. Although becoming a Christian doesn't mean you won't have problems - it does mean God's there to help you through life (Psalm 46:1), and save you when your life is finished (2 Timothy 1:12). At this moment, if your life is on the upswing, then show compassion and help the Christians close to you who struggle (Romans 12:15; 1 Peter 3:8).

Praising The Ceiling

Robert F. Turner

I wouldn't trade Grampa, I love you! for an hour of oratory. A warm look of trust, or a child's touch, is praise far exceeding mere words. And I am persuaded the heavenly Father would have us talk to and with Him, rather than **about** Him. Perhaps that is why I am intrigued by a shift of pronouns in the beloved 23rd Psalm.

David begins, The Lord is my shepherd... He maketh me to lie down...speaking of the Lord in the third person. The psalmist is talking **about** the Lord. He leadeth me...restoreth my soul... etc. This continues through verse three.

Then in verse four there is a change to second person—David begins to talk to or with the Lord. Now it is, thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. The first portion is a tender testimonial of David's love for the Lord, and declares the personal relationship of shepherd and sheep. But it is a declaration—it tells **others** something **about** the Lord. The second portion loses sight of all others, and speaks directly to the shepherd.

I am reminded of a story, heard long ago, about a social gathering where guests were asked to contribute something to the occasion. Many recited poetry, and one eloquent speaker made a theatrical production of the 23rd Psalm. The next in line was an unlettered man, now greatly embarrassed because the 23rd Psalm was the only poetry he knew; and he was forced to repeat what had just been recited by the talented gentleman.

There was a stir among the guests as he began his halting, unpolished presentation. But my shepherd was more than words to this man; and as he followed David into his close personal relationship with the Lord, he forgot the audience. He ceased to talk **about** the shepherd, and began to speak to Him. The room grew quiet.

And when he had finished, the eloquent man arose to apologize for his production. I know the 23rd. Psalm well, he said. But this man knows the shepherd.

Of what value is a well-worded prayer—that stops at the ceiling?

Plain Talk October 1972