

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## ARE WE TAKING THE BACKBONE OUT OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

By Joe R. Price

In more and more cases, that is precisely what is happening. Consider some of the evidence so that we will not be guilty of cowardice in the defense and spread of truth (Phil. 1:16).

### I. PRESENT TRENDS

The trend today is “political correctness.” It has gotten to the point with some brethren that they shudder to hear names called from the pulpit to identify and rebuke sin. They forget that Jesus and his apostles repeatedly did so in order to admonish sinners to repent and to warn others from following their sinful path (Matt. 15:7-14; 2 Tim. 4:16-18; 4:14). How can we call people to repent if we will not identify the sinner and his sin?!

Unity in doctrinal and moral diversity is gathering momentum as the rallying cry of brethren no longer content with the old paths (Jer. 6:16). Teachers of error on divorce and remarriage, true worship, women's role in the church, etc. are being warmly received instead of being marked as false teachers who subvert souls with their error (2 Jn. 9-11; Rom. 16:17-18). Instead of calling sinners to repentance, brethren are often saying “we cannot judge the matter...it is between them and God”. Just *“abide in the calling wherein you were called”* (even if it is sin!) Can we no longer judge what is right and call sinners to repentance?! (Lk. 12:57)

### II. PRESENT-DAY PREACHING (cf. 2 Tim. 4:2-5)

Some brethren are telling us that we cannot really know for certain the truth on crucial Bible subjects (i.e., divorce and remarriage, plan of salvation). This is reflected in their preaching, which has become intellectual rather than persuasive. After all, if we cannot definitely know the truth, how can you definitely persuade people to obey it with firm assurance of faith?! But we can understand and obey the truth today (Eph. 3:3-5; 5:17; 2 Pet. 3:15-18).

Using psychology as the foundation for one's preaching is increasingly popular among Christians. We are being told that we can easily identify a person's personality which will in turn help us deal with him better. At best, judging the personality of others is very tricky business. What is equally dangerous and deceptive about it is that we end up pigeon-holing people almost before we get to know them. How we deal with them is then based upon some psychological profile developed by man instead of the gospel revealed by God! The Bible does not teach us this approach to loving our neighbor. It is the wisdom of man masquerading as the gospel of Christ! I wonder what temperament or personality Jesus would be assigned by some of my pop-psychology preaching brethren! But aren't we supposed to be like Him? Do not be deceived! (1 Cor. 2:1-5; Col. 2:8; 2 Cor. 2:11)

Still others are telling us that unless we stress the positive aspects of Christianity we will surely lose our children and our opportunities to teach others. We definitely need balance in our preaching and in our lives. But practical “positivism” often becomes an unwillingness to debate the truth and engage error, lest we become labeled as “negative,” “fanatics” or “unfriendly.” I wonder how well Jesus and Paul would fair under such a colored microscope of hypocrisy?! (cf. Matt. 23; Acts 17:2-3; et al.)

### III. EFFORTS TO “MODERNIZE” THE CHURCH

The old Jerusalem gospel is out of date to many brethren. They are groping for new paths to follow. Some

have rejected establishing Bible authority for what we teach and practice by using commands (direct statements), apostolic approved examples and necessary inference (see Acts 15:7-21 for examples of each being used). The “new hermeneutic” (method of interpretation) is really an old apostasy (1 Tim. 4:1)! It is spawning repeated departures from the revealed truth. Women are serving as elders, preaching from pulpits and leading singing. Denominationalists are being warmly received as “brethren in Christ.” Doctrine is “not that important” according to these change doctors in the church. Funny, the apostles of Jesus said it is (Gal. 1:6-10). Wonder who is right?

The social gospel is clearly an effort to modernize the church. The church has been given the work of spreading the gospel, spiritually edifying the saints, and caring for the needs of the saints (Acts 6:1-6; 11:27-30; Eph. 4:11-12). The work of social activity is rightly the work of the home. The church is not a funnel we must pour every good work through before it can be done. As families let us take our responsibility to develop the social as well as the spiritual character of our children, and let the congregation do its work of teaching and upholding the word of God.

How much backbone will the church of Christ have in the days and years to come? Only as much as each Christian is willing to have (1 Cor. 16:13). We must each have the courage of faith to take our stand with Jesus and His revealed word of truth, being ready to suffer dishonor for the name (Mk. 8:34-38; Acts 5:41). – **Mount Baker Church of Christ Website.** ■

---



## Facts About The Bible

The Bible is composed of 66 books. There are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. Some 39 or 40 men had a part in the writing of the Bible, from Moses to the apostle John. It took over 1500 years to produce the Bible.

Out of all the men who wrote the books of the Bible, Luke “*the beloved physician*” (Col. 4:14) was the only Gentile. He penned the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.

The first section of the Old Testament is called the Pentateuch. It contains the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). These books, written by Moses, cover the period of time from Creation to the death of Moses, just prior to the entrance of God’s people into the promised land.

The Old Testament contains twelve books of history, from Joshua through Esther. There are five books of poetry: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. There are five books of the major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel. There are 12 minor prophets, from Hosea through Malachi.

The New Testament contains four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), each telling the story of the life of Christ from different viewpoints. The New Testament has one book of history, the book of Acts, which tells of the establishment of the church and the growth of Christianity in the first century. It also has 21 epistles (Romans through Jude), the majority of which were written by the apostle Paul, and one book of prophecy (the Revelation), penned by John while on Patmos.

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew (with the exception of Daniel 2:4b-7:28 and Ezra 4:8-6:18). The New Testament was written in Greek. – **Selected** ■

***“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”*** (Heb. 4:12).

**Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM**

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: [www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com](http://www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com) - Email: [lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com](mailto:lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com) - Phone: 209-365-9250