

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

CONSISTENCY THOU ART A JEWEL!

By Keith Greer

Suppose you wake up one day and decide you've had enough of your family, so you just leave for a month. Things are closing in, and you need a break. Let your wife mind the children, pay the bills, and run the house for a while. She can worry about paying the rent and the bills, and buying enough food for the family. After all, for many years, you have worried about these matters. Now it's her turn.

Then suddenly one evening, you walk into the house at dinner time, and expect a place to be set for you! You offer your wife and children no explanation or apology. Would you feel shame or remorse about your conduct? Let me honestly ask you, how many wives, or for that matter, husbands would put up with such conduct from their spouses? Could you just continue on as though nothing had happened?

What about a person who just walks away from the job and misses work for a couple weeks. The company receives no communication about, or explanation for, this brief vacation. Then, one day the employee shows up for the regular shift and begins work as though nothing had happened. How long would it take the boss to send such a fellow packing? Could he expect a glowing recommendation to take to his next job interview? I think not.

Yet, how many times do church members take multi-week sabbaticals from worshipping with the saints. They show no concern for the Lord's work; their support is just missing. When they come back, they “pick up where they left off” as if they hadn't missed a beat! No repentance, no remorse, no sorrow for their conduct, and they expect God to accept them and their service. They sing, pray, and commune just like those who are faithful.

Let's consider some scriptures. **“And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God”** (2 Cor. 8:5). Can a person who sets such an example truly say he/she is given to the Lord? **“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you”** (Matt. 6:33). Could this person convince God, you, or anyone else that God has first place in his/her life?

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:24, 25). Could a person who sets such an inconsistent example provoke the brethren to love and good works? How could such a brother ever encourage others to serve God faithfully? I would say they probably have stirred brethren up, but to what!

Members who conduct themselves in such fashion are inconsistent. Who do they think they are fooling? No man or woman would treat his/her spouse, family, or employer in such an irresponsible way and expect to get away with it. Yet, the actions of many brethren, convince me that they are trying to “put one over on the Lord and the brethren.” No right-thinking person could believe that God is pleased with such conduct.

Sadly, I'm afraid they think they are getting away with it. I strongly disagree. How much stronger and closer would the Lord's church be if all its members gave God the same concern, zeal, diligence, devotion, and loyalty they give their families and jobs? What truly should be first in our lives? Our service to God! How difficult it is in this fast-paced world to keep our priorities where they should be. Christianity is a lifetime occupation—seven days a week, 365 days a year, with no retirement. Do our lives show this type of commitment? **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”** (Matt. 5:16). Is your light shining, dimming, or flickering?

Brethren do not think for a moment that people don't notice the examples we set in our lives. What are we teaching them? “Consistency thou art a jewel!” God is watching also. Do you really believe you can get to heaven by living an inconsistent Christian life? Think soberly on these things!! ■

“YOUR QUARREL, SIR, IS WITH MY CREATOR”

By David Dann

Through the prophet Isaiah, the Holy Spirit issues the following warning: *“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”* (Isa. 5:20).

Democratic presidential hopeful and current mayor of South Bend, Indiana, Pete Buttigieg, recently made headlines with his public challenge to vice president Mike Pence. Described as a “devout Episcopalian,” Buttigieg is the first U.S. presidential candidate to openly live the homosexual lifestyle and is “married” to a man named Chasten. According to a CBS News report, Mayor Pete gave a speech in which he said this:

“My marriage to Chasten has made me a better man and yes, Mr. Vice President, it has moved me closer to God... I can tell you, that if me being gay was a choice, it was a choice that was made far, far above my pay grade... And that’s the thing I wish the Mike Pence’s of the world could understand, that if you have a problem with who I am, your problem is not with me. Your quarrel, sir, is with my creator.”

What do we find when we consult Mayor Pete’s Creator on such matters as these?

1. God has decreed that the homosexual lifestyle is sinful. The Creator inspired the apostle Paul to write disapprovingly of a situation in which, *“Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due”* (Rom. 1:27). Aside from being “shameful” and “error,” homosexual behavior is also described in this section of Scripture as being “vile,” “against nature” (vs. 26), “not fitting” (vs. 28), and as conduct that results from rejecting the Creator. Contrary to Mayor Pete’s assertion, the one who argues in favor of homosexuality is the one who is quarreling with his Creator.

2. God does not lead men into sin. While Mayor Pete implies that his homosexual behavior is the result of a choice that his Creator made for him, the Bible indicates otherwise. James writes, *“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed”* (Jas. 1:13-14). Rather than forcing anyone to engage in sinful conduct, God provides a way of escape in the face of temptation (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13). The inspired wise man writes, *“Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes”* (Eccl. 7:29). Neither Mayor Pete, nor anyone else, may legitimately blame the Creator for his own choice to pursue a sinful lifestyle.

3. God does not have fellowship with sinners. Of his “marriage” to a man, Mayor Pete boldly claims that “it has moved me closer to God.” However, the truth is that sin never moves anyone closer to God, and instead only alienates the sinner from his Creator. The apostle John writes, *“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth”* (1 Jn. 1:5-6). Like all sinners, Mayor Pete must repent of his sin and obey the truth in order to draw near to God (cf. Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:17-18; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Conclusion

We have grown accustomed to those who are engaged in sin voicing their rejection of God, Christ, and the Bible. However, we have now entered a new era in which a high-profile public figure, who lives an openly sinful lifestyle, not only claims to be a Christian, but also claims that God approves of his sin. *“Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren”* (Jas. 1:16). ■

“9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9-10, NKJV).

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

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