

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“Not Fit For The Kingdom”

By Eugene Crawley

In Luke 9:62, we find an interesting statement of the Lord. He said, *“No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”*

This indeed is quite a charge, to say that one is *“not fit for the kingdom,”* and one could well involve himself in difficulty by making such a statement about some brethren. Nevertheless, it is true; and Jesus made no apology whatever for saying it. The inevitable conclusion then is that some are not fit (suitable) for the kingdom. It would do all of us well to do some soul searching and determine whether or not the statement may apply to us.

There are not a few who fall into this category and will find themselves in it but too late, if they wait until judgment. Let us take note of a few who do not measure up to the Lord's requirements, and who would find themselves in this group:

Those who do not put the kingdom first. There are any number of people who have been immersed, and who claim membership in some local church, but have not attended a single worship period for months, perhaps years. Is this putting the kingdom first? Not unless one starts at the bottom of the list! However, if and when, such are asked about church membership, they very readily claim to be members of the Lord's church. Those who put the kingdom of the Lord, His church, so far down the line in importance, in their plans, their love, and concern, according to Jesus' statement and standard are *“not fit for the kingdom.”* Such brethren have *“erred from the truth,”* are *“sinners,”* *“dead spiritually,”* and need to be converted (Jas. 5:19, 20). Peter says, in regard to such, *“. . . the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness . . .”* (2 Pet. 2:20-22). They have gone weeks, months, and some for years, without assembling with the saints to worship God; thus, they have not commemorated His death, or communed with Christ, not given of their means toward the advancement of His Cause, and failed, not only to worship God, but to work in His kingdom. By no stretch of the imagination could one say that such are putting the kingdom first.

Those who engage in works of the flesh. Paul enumerates these (Gal. 5:19, 20), and this catalog of sins is repulsive even-to think about. Yet, we find brethren who have forsaken the Lord because of their love for such things and are *“not fit for the kingdom.”* It is not necessary to engage in all of these to be guilty of sin; one is enough and is too many if we want to remain in fellowship with the Lord and be of value in His service.

Those who have turned aside to a perverted gospel. Though it may sound strange, or seem so, to some to say that members of the body of Christ have committed such an act, it is true nevertheless. Even in the days of Paul, he said of the Galatian brethren that they had fallen from grace. Too, in warning the Ephesian elders, he said, *“Also of your ownelves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them”* (Acts 20:30). Some today, far too many, have rejected the wisdom of God revealed in the gospel, and are teaching and practicing a perverted gospel, one devised by their own wisdom. And, though it may not be a written creed, it is one just the same. To do so is to place oneself in the group of which the Lord said, are *“not fit for the kingdom.”*

While others could be mentioned who are *“not fit for the kingdom”* by their own choice not to follow the teaching of Christ, and put Him first, it is hoped that these will prompt all to make a further application of such, and especially as such applies personally. When one finds himself failing in his service to God, he should not wait to make the necessary amends because his most valuable possession (the soul) is at stake.

It is heartening to know, however, that there are others, and the number seems to be growing, who indeed are

“fit,” suitable for the kingdom and the Master’s use. These should be an encouragement to others to come out of their error, and work that which is right in the sight of God. It is also the duty of those who are faithful, and thus **“fit,”** to teach others the error of their way and lead them out of sin back to righteousness. May we ever be mindful of this responsibility and fail not to discharge it faithfully. To do so is to convert the sinner from the error of his way, save the soul from death, and to save oneself. Are you **“fit for the kingdom?”** – *Truth Magazine*, October 16, 1980. ■

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Fill-In the Blanks (Time for Self-Examination)

By Mike Pittman

“Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves” (2 Cor. 13:5).

Self-examination is a critical step in our endeavor to walk faithfully with God. Following is an exercise which will assist us in **“proving ourselves.”** Just fill in each blank with **YOUR OWN NAME**. You can do this with a pen or pencil, or do it mentally. These are statements which other Christians would make about you.

1. “You can tell that _____ is concerned about his/her spiritual growth.”
2. “_____ is always present for Bible study.”
3. “Every time we meet for Bible study, it is obvious that _____ has done his/her homework.”
4. “I have never heard _____ gossip or run down another Christian.”
5. “It is easy for all to see that _____ has the right priorities.”
6. “_____ is not easily influenced by the world.”
7. “One of the things I appreciated about _____ is that he/she is always thinking of others.”
8. “_____ is modest in his/her dress.”
9. “If _____ isn’t present on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, or Wednesday evening, you just know that he/she must be very ill.”
10. “_____ is very diligent in his/her service to the Lord.”

How did writing **YOUR** name each time make you feel? Did it assist you in self-examination? Did it make you want to do better? ■

“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:27 — NKJV).

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CLIMATE CHANGE

By Jeff Smelser

In an article yesterday titled, “On climate change, it’s time to start panicking,” Matthew Rozsa of Salon says, “If we do not resolve the problem of man-made climate change, it could quite literally spell the end of human civilization.”

God says: **“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease”** (Gen. 8:22, NKJV).

Surely we have a responsibility to use the blessings God has given us wisely and to be good stewards of them, but the end of this world is in God’s hands. And until the time He chooses, it will persist, mankind will persist, seed-time and harvest will persist. While Rosza is worried about “the total destruction of our species” due to “global warming,” he should be concerned about another sort of warming, the condemnation from **“Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”** ■

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

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