

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Camouflage

By Greg Gwin

We are all familiar with camouflage, or “camo” as we like to call it. We most commonly see it when hunters are preparing to hit the field in search of game. But this special clothing was originally perfected by the military. The main idea, of course, is to blend in with your surroundings so that you are not so easily detected by the enemy. More recently, since our army has been fighting wars in the desert, the patterns have been modified to help hide soldiers in that environment. There are even special camo types for arctic or snowy conditions.

This effort to disguise oneself to avoid detection by enemies is a good thing in the armies of men. But a problem arises when soldiers in God’s army (2 Tim. 2:3) try to do the same. Remember, “camo” is designed to make one “blend in” to the surroundings. But, Christian soldiers should make no effort to do so. Unfortunately, many do. We see too many who want to talk, dress, and act like the worldly folks around them. They want to go to the same places and do the same things. In short, they want to hide their real identity and avoid detection as true disciples.

Why would a Christian do this? Jesus targeted the problem when He said: **“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels”** (Mark 8:38). Sadly many are **“ashamed”** to show their attachment to the cause of Christ. The outcome for them, as Jesus warned, will be eternal loss.

May we all develop the unwavering devotion of the apostle Paul, who boldly said: **“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ”** (Rom. 1:16). May we, like him, be able to say in the end: **“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”** (2 Tim. 4:7). ■

The Sin of Murmuring

By Earl Fly

The word **“murmur”** is defined as **“low, muttered complaints; grumbling.”** (*Webster*). It is condemned by God as being sinful. We are commended to **“do all things without murmuring and disputings.”** (Phil. 2:16). The apostle Paul warned Christians against this sin in his letter to the Corinthians: **“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer”** (1 Cor. 10:10). The sinfulness of murmuring is vividly illustrated by God’s severity of punishment toward the guilty Jews, as shown in the following account.

Korah, Dathan, Ahiram, fifty princes of the congregation and others rebelled and murmured against God’s servants Moses and Aaron (Num. 16:1-11). **“The earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation”** (vv. 32-33). **“And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense”** (v. 35). When the Jews murmured that Moses and Aaron were responsible for the deaths. God killed fourteen thousand, seven hundred of them by a plague (vv. 41-49). This is written for our admonition and should cause all murmurers in the church to repent and reform, lest they suffer a **“soror punishment”** (Heb. 10:28-29).

A murmurer can do great harm and irreparable damage in a congregation by creating discontent discouragement and apathy among members, by sowing discord among the brethren (which God hates - Prov. 6:19), by undermining the work of preacher, teachers, deacons, and the rule of elders. This many times creates a general attitude of dissatisfaction and loss of interest, enthusiasm and zeal, resulting in decreased attendance, contribution and impairment of all work in general. The murmurer may then be the first to criticize the lack of growth, and may use the preacher or someone else as the scapegoat to bear the blame, not realizing or ignoring the fact that his own sin is responsible.

The murmurer does not truly love God and is not really interested in the welfare and growth of the church, but in his own selfish desires and opinions. He is either woefully ignorant of or willfully disregards God's word regarding his sin, and is a dangerous threat to the cause of Christ. He can and does destroy or greatly lessen the influence and work of those who happen to be the object of his disgruntled attack. It is difficult to deal with such a situation because often times the murmurer does not have the courage or character to honorably discuss his complaints with the proper ones, but whispers them in secret to others. Christians should not lend receptive ears nor endorsement to murmuring, but exhort the guilty one to cease his sin. Remember, if one will murmur to you, he may murmur about you, because many times he is a pharisaical faultfinder, a chronic complainer with a hypercritical attitude who is usually never satisfied very long with any arrangement.

We earnestly exhort all murmurers everywhere in the name of Christ to repent of this sin, to cease and desist in tearing down the work of God, and to get busy in the kingdom to build it up. Those who truly love God and his church have no desire to be hypercritical faultfinders, wandering about murmuring to all who will listen. If anyone should persist in this sin after proper warnings and efforts to restore, then scriptural discipline should be brought about to protect the flock of God and its work. The work of our Lord is too important to allow murmurer to run and ruin the church. ■

The Importance of Bible Study

By Frank Himmel

- A. The sacred writings are able to give us the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3:15).
- B. The Scriptures make us complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- C. Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17).
- D. The gospel is God's power to salvation (Rom. 1:16).
- E. Treasuring God's word in our hearts helps us not sin against Him (Ps. 119:11).
- F. The things written are for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope (Rom. 15:4).
- G. Not knowing the Scriptures results in erroneous thinking (Matt. 22:29).
- H. The word of God's grace is able to build us up and give us an inheritance (Acts 20:32).
- I. The word of God sanctifies us, sets us apart to Him (John 17:17).
- J. The truth contained in the Bible makes us free (John 8:32).
- K. The word of God lives and abides forever (1 Pet. 1:22-25).
- L. The words of Jesus will judge us at the last day (John 12:48). ■

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (Eph. 3:1-6 KJV).

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

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