

THE

HARVESTER

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:3)

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DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

Has anyone ever called you an oddball? Or said that you were weird or strange? If you are a Christian then you can probably answer yes to this question. To the world there is something strange about the Christian. They cannot comprehend a person who does not take pleasure in all of the sinful activities which they consider a vital part of the "good life." It is exactly as Peter described, *"Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you."* (I Pet. 4:4)

The Apostle Paul said that Christ *"gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a PECULIAR*

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people?" (Tit. 2:14) The primary meaning here of the word peculiar is "special." Christians are a special people because they reject the ways of sin and death and cling to righteousness. But this also makes us odd.

The Lord told us what we must do to make ourselves acceptable to Him. *"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you"* (II Cor. 6:17) Clearly we must be distinct from the world, but in what way? The world is full of liars, thieves, murderers, drunkards, sexually immoral people, and people who practice all manner of evil. It is our duty, as Christians, to separate ourselves from all of these sinful ways. We cannot be partakers of these things and still be a child of God.

We should not go out of the way to make ourselves strange, but we have to accept the fact that being a Christian automatically makes us different. We have to live and work in the world, but we don't have to be part of it.

Today one of the biggest pressures we feel from society is to try to conform to a model of behavior which is deemed as acceptable and appropriate. This message is especially strong for our children. Most parents have to face almost daily requests by their children to buy them something which "everyone else" already has.

Today kids are expected to wear the right tennis shoes, the right blue jeans, the right shirts. To watch the right TV. shows and movies, to listen to the right music, to have the right video games, and the list goes on. If a kid doesn't have all of these things other kids will ridicule him and he may be ostracized from a group that he wants desperately to belong to.

How do most parents react to this? The vast majority are far too indulgent with their children and this is what has caused the whole problem in the first place. Many parents will buy little Johnny that \$150 pair of tennis shoes so he can be like his friends, even if it stretches the family budget a little bit.

There is nothing wrong, in principle, with giving your child nice things if you can afford them. But there is something much more important going on here than most parents realize. What is little Johnny learning when he sees his parents sacrifice to buy him those expensive tennis shoes? Is he learning that his parents love him? Perhaps? But I'll tell you what he definitely is learning. He's learning that fitting in is very important, and that it is alright to devote a great deal of time, effort and money so that you can have what everyone else has.

Then when Johnny gets a little older and begins to smoke, or drink, or take drugs, like some of his friends are doing, his parents are heartbroken and simply can't understand it. They know they taught him that these things were wrong all of his life. So why did Johnny abandon what his parents taught him? He didn't! They sent him two very contradictory signals and he was forced to make a choice between them.

Have you ever heard the saying that actions speak louder than words? Yes, Johnny's parents TOLD him these things were wrong. But they SHOWED him how important it was to fit in, and that's all he is doing, fitting in with his friends. We must show our children from an early age that we cannot conform ourselves to the world. If we fail to do this, then that is exactly what they will do, regardless of what instructions we have given them.

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Lk. 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, and all correspondence to:

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At all costs we must take a stand for what is right. Regardless of the attitudes or actions of others, we must stand firm on the truth of God. It may sometimes cost us friends and even family to do this. Although this may seem a difficult thing, Jesus said it is actually a wonderful thing for us. *"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."* (Luke 6:22-23)

When you stop and think about it the Bible is filled with stories of strange and peculiar men. Men like Noah, Job, Abraham, Elijah, Daniel, and especially Christ. They were all odd by the world's standards. But the world's standards are not what counts. Just as these men of antiquity have done, we must reject the conventional wisdom of this world and dare to be different.

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who were the couple who helped Apollos understand that Jesus was Christ?
2. In pursuing the Amalekites, David was aided by one of their servants. What was the servant's nationality?
3. How many brothers did the rich man have in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus?
4. What never satisfies us, if we love silver?
5. What besides the firstborn children of the land of Egypt were killed by the last plague God sent?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. How many days did the people aboard ship, along with Paul, go without food during the storm off Crete? **FOURTEEN DAYS (Acts 27:33)**
2. How many Levites returned from captivity according to Nehemiah? **74 (Neh. 7:43)**
3. How does Peter describe God's promises in II Peter? **EXCEEDING GREAT AND PRECIOUS (II Pet. 1:4)**
4. What kind of sleep does the working man experience according to Ecclesiastes? **SWEET (Eccl. 5:12)**
5. What chapters in the Bible record the story of the flood? **GENESIS 6, 7, and 8**

IF YOU CAN'T BELIEVE ALL YOU
HEAR, YOU SHOULD AT LEAST
BELIEVE ALL YOU SAY.

THE PROPER ATTITUDE TO DO GOD'S WILL

Too often when we are asked to perform some duty in connection with the worship service we consider it more of a burden than a privilege. When we are asked to help with the communion service, or lead in prayer, or lead a song, or even bring a lesson, it is our duty to do so. It is not the duty of a few but the duty of us all. If, when we are asked to do one or more of these acts, we consider it more of a burden than a privilege or an honor, do we really believe we are pleasing to God? Everything we do in the worship service should be done in the right frame of mind -- if not, it will be rejected of God. Merely doing our duty because it is our turn or because no one else will do it is not enough. We should be honored to do whatever we are called upon to do because God so loved us that he gave his only Son to die for us that we may have eternal life (Jn. 3:16).

This attitude and desire to do God's will should also be carried outside the worship service in visiting the sick, tending to the needs of those who cannot help themselves and living an example before others and thus hopefully leading someone to Christ or strengthening a brother or sister.

Everything a Christian does should be done with an attitude of love -- a love for Christ and his church and a love for his brothers and sisters and neighbors. The proper Christian love will lead us to be more tolerant of each other. Not to the extent of overlooking error but more tolerant to the differences in personalities, attitudes, and ways.

We are so few in numbers here and if we can't perform our Christian duties with the proper love and respect for God, Christ, the Church,

and our fellow Christians, we are doomed as a congregation of the Lord's church. We have become so harsh and critical towards each other that we fail to see the good. If we look for the good first, the faults will disappear.

Let us strive to be united first and foremost in love for the truth and the church and then for each other.

(Editor's Note: The above speech was given to a congregation recently by a dear brother in Christ. He requested his name to be withheld at this time.)

I WAS A STRANGER (Matt. 25:34-46)

A young sailor telephoned his parents from San Diego after the war saying he was bringing along with him his buddy. "You see, Mom," he said, "My friend was severely wounded. He has one arm, one leg, and one eye. So I thought he would live with us!"

His mother's voice hesitated, but after some reflection, she said, "Of course, let him come and stay a little while with us." But her tone seemed to imply that they would not like to be burdened with such a handicapped person.

Two days later the parents received a telegram from the adjutant general informing them that their son had leaped to his death from a hotel window. When they received the body, it had only one arm, one leg and one eye.

Love is expressed by one's manner and tone of voice, as much as by his words . . . *"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."* (Heb. 13:2)

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GOСПPEL MEETINGS

| <u>Dates</u> | <u>Place & Time</u> | <u>Speaker</u> |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| July 30 - Aug. 4 | Rainsville, AL 7:00pm | Sam Dick (Cave City, KY) |
| July 31 - Aug. 6 | Leitchfield, KY | Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL) |
| August 6 - 11 (Su - F) | Owens Road Church Prattville, AL 7:00pm | Bob Golson Rufus Williams Tommy Bulger Craig Grant |
| August 6 - 11 | Valley, AL | James McDonald (Woodbury, TN) |
| August 11 - 13 | Lake City Church near Atlanta, GA | Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL) |
| August 18 - 20 | Pleasant Ridge Church Woodbury, TN | Jim Fritchard (Tecumseh, OK) |

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UPON WHAT MUST WE AGREE TO PLEASE GOD?

The deity of Christ. (Matt. 16:16)

The sacrifice of Christ. (John 3:16)

The authority of Christ. (Col. 1:16-18)

The testimony of Christ. (John 20:30-31)

The commands of Christ. (Matt. 28:20)

The promises of Christ. (Rev. 22:12)

The name of Christ. (Phi. 2:10)

The church of Christ. (Matt. 16:18)