



F. Y. C.

For Your Consideration

❖ AUGUST 2015 ❖

The Slippery Slope

*How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!*

Psalms 1:1

NOTE THE PROGRESSION

walk, stand, sit

listen, join, defend

It's not one giant step from doing good to doing wrong. It's three small steps.

What are the three steps to perdition (final ruin)?

STEP ONE: DABBLE IN WHAT IS QUESTIONABLE OR WRONG

Become lax; ignore rules in a particular instance.

Violate conscience.

(May only plan to dabble, but like the vortex of a whirlpool, one is drawn in more and more.)

STEP TWO: PARTICIPATE KNOWING IT'S WRONG

Refuse admonitions of Scriptures and of brethren.

Stifle prodding of conscience.

Offer excuses.

STEP THREE: JUSTIFYING AND DEFENDING IT.

Conscience seared so it can't prod.

Can't see any wrong in doing it.

Oppose those who disagree.

STAGES OF THREE STEPS TO RUIN

By dabbling, to doing, to defending.

By giving in, to giving over, to giving up.

WATCH THAT FIRST STEP!

Resist

being drawn into sin by evil surroundings.

Refrain

from questionable and worldly activity.

Remain

steadfast!

Joyful or Miserable?

"But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed." Romans 6:17

Some of my most miserable moments in life have been when I was involved in doing what I didn't want to do, participating in what I felt was a waste of time, or doing what I had been "talked into" doing. These feelings are not mine exclusively. No doubt, you can relate to these feelings. And the reason for the misery is obvious: my heart was not in what I was doing.

We find happiness in doing what we want to do, when we want to do it, in a way we like to do it. In other words, we are happiest when we fulfill our heart's desire. The good feeling is being produced because we believe that what is being done is important and needful; that it is a good investment of our time and energy.

The Heart Must Be Involved

Unless the heart is involved, one is surely going to be miserable. We feel a lack of joy when we do "what's expected" of us. In order to be happy we must feel good about what we are doing. This is especially true in serving the Lord. Commitment without the heart being involved makes one's participation perfunctory, and as a result one feels miserable. Perfunctory (that is, going through the motions mechanically, routinely) participation may give the appearance of true devotion to Christ, but without the heart being in it, it is just so much activity – a "noisy gong or clanging cymbal." In no way does it benefit the participant. And, in some ways it's even detrimental.

Heart-less Worship Is Vain

Unless, and until, one is motivated by a sincere desire to serve the Lord, religion, church membership, and participation in church activities will be but empty actions. It does not bring peace and contentment, but the very opposite.

Without a sincere desire, assembling with

the saints will never be the pleasant, refreshing and invigorating experience the Lord intended it to be. The song service does not lift the spirit. The prayers do not make one feel closer to God. The communion service doesn't produce the true appreciation of Christ's supreme sacrifice or a great expectation of His second coming. The sermon is tolerated as a necessary thing to endure. And the contribution is seen as a necessary "payment."

But with a genuine desire to serve the Lord, participation in these activities become a joyful and meaningful experience. One that leaves the individual better off because he or she has been involved.

Commands Are Not a Burden

The Lord knows that it is absolutely necessary for us to have fellowship (joint participation) with others for support and encouragement, as well as to honor Him and the Father in worship. He has not given the admonition so as to place a burden (obligation) upon us. A Christian whose heart is right sees it for what it really is: a necessary participation that helps one maintain and enhance his faith.

When some find themselves feeling miserable while participating in the things of the Lord, they may decide to stay away. But this only produces guilt. So they are torn between the two: feeling guilty for staying away, or being miserable while participating. The only way to resolve the matter is to have a change of heart. Changing one's thinking. Because that's where the problem lies – in the heart.

Once one has given his or her heart to the Lord, the rest falls into place. Living for the Lord becomes a joyful experience. Church services become a refreshing activity. Commands are seen, not as a burden; but guidelines to aid one in doing what is good and right.

BODY LANGUAGE

One can communicate in two ways, verbal and non-verbal. One can speak volumes without uttering a word. Examples of such non-verbal communication are found in the Book of Proverbs.

EYES, FEET, FINGER, LIPS

Who winks with his eyes, who signals with his feet, who points with his fingers; who with perversity in his heart continually devises evil, who spreads strife.

6:13-14

He who winks his eyes does so to devise perverse things; he who compresses his lips brings evil to pass.

16:30

There is a kind—oh how lofty are his eyes! And his eyelids are raised in arrogance.

30:13

FACE

A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, but when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.

15:13

Strength and dignity are her clothing, And she smiles at the future.

31:25

HANDS

“A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest”—your poverty will come in like a vagabond And your need like an armed man.

6:10-11

EARS

Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprover to a listening ear.

25:12

He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

28:9

He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be answered.

21:13

He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise.

15:31

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***Be careful what you communicate non-verbally as well as verbally.***

## Unreliable Foundations For One's Religious Beliefs

“I think” – “I feel” – “I imagine” – “My Minister Said”

**SUCCINCTLY  
PUT**

*Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. Colossians 2:7-8*



## Ponder This

### Author

The verb “author,” which had been out of use for a long period, has been rejuvenated in recent years with the sense “to assume responsibility for the content of a published text.”

#### AUTHORS ALL

Each person is an author of a unique book called “My Life.” The contents of which each person bears full responsibility. It may be a thin book or a thick book. If one lives to the age of 75, it will have 328,520 pages (days) – one page for each day! It is being written one page at a time. The number of pages is not important – what is written on them is crucial. Once a page is written it cannot be changed. Editing is not possible. Tears cannot remove or change a single word.

Are you pleased with what you have written so far? What are you writing in your book today? We all enjoy books that have a happy ending. Let’s make sure the book we author has a happy ending by following the teachings of Jesus Christ and seeking His forgiveness for the sins that stain some of the pages.

*And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.*

Revelation 20:12

*... and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.*

1 Peter 1:8-9



## WORD STUDY

enhance your Bible knowledge

### Benediction

(A blessing or invocation)

At the close of the book of Numbers in the Old Testament, we read:

*Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, “Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them:*

***The LORD bless you, and keep you;  
The LORD make His face shine on you,  
And be gracious to you;  
The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.”***

Numbers 6:24-26

The words of this blessing have been put to music (hymn #670 in our songbook) and are often used as a benediction.

### Doxology

(An expression of praise to God)

At the close of the book of Jude is a doxology that has been put to music and used in closing comments.

***Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.***

Jude 1:24-25

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