

Kingdom News

Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever... (Matt. 6:13)

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Gods of Our Own Choosing

I Cannot Believe What I Just Heard

Sara and Melissa were talking, one morning. Sara was sharing, with Melissa, a disturbing conversation that she had heard the prior week.

Sara: "...and she was saying that she was concerned about their souls; that she didn't want her family to die and go to hell ..."

Melissa: "... did she say "why" she thought that they may be in jeopardy of going to hell? ..."

Sara: "... she mentioned that they didn't believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God; that her parents thought that because they lived a good life, and treated people like they wanted to be treated; they believed that they would be fine when they died. I agree with her parents, I don't know why she's so uptight about it. God is not like that. He wouldn't send good people to hell, that's just ridiculous. God wants us to be happy... and healthy...to have fun ...and to not worry about anything. That's the kind of God I believe in. My God is supposed to take care of all of my needs, so that I don't have to worry about a thing. And when I die, I'm going to heaven. I wouldn't believe in a God that would send people to hell. It's simply absurd. I was so angry just listening to her. It took everything I had not to just walk away while she was talking; the nerve of

...Our Own Choosing

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The Leadership Corner *Leadership Living, Inc.*

On March 23, 2008 the Easter Holiday will be celebrated by millions of people across the country. For many, it will be a time of remembrance of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. For some, it will be a fun time to celebrate a bunny and enjoy candy and painted eggs. In this article we will focus on the millions of believers that understand what Easter or *Resurrection Sunday* is all about. In the days and weeks leading up to *Resurrection Sunday* believers from different backgrounds will engage in activities that are meant to prepare the heart to worship, reflect on one's behavior, repent, and commit to goals that would be pleasing to God.

I encourage each believer that reads this article to invite the Lord to do some things differently in your life, this year. The word in the Christian community for 2008 is that God will use His people to do mighty acts that some have never experienced (in terms of God working through them). For example, God may have certain believers move from one city and state to another. He may also have believers connect with the life partners He has for them. He may have some people start businesses on shoe-string budgets (as a part time venture); or any number of other activities.

Now, you may say that people do these types of things all of the time. That's true, but it is very

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different when God tells you that it is “Time” for you to do it. When God does this, He provides the means for you to accomplish what you set out to do. He will also teach you wonderful lessons along the way; and cause major blessings for others as a result of your obedience. Furthermore, God will be glorified as you respond in obedience to what He instructs you to do.

Now is the time. This is the year. All God needs is for each of us to make the commitment that when He gives us instruction, we will obey. Once we’ve done this (in our hearts and with our mouths) God will begin to manipulate things in our environments to agree with what He places in our hearts to do. Are you ready? I’m ready too. Okay God, do your thing; we commit to follow you in whatever You tell us to do!



Leadership Living, Inc.
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DIAMONDS



In the Kingdom of our Lord, life is a School of Discipline.

We are to be disciplined in our love, patience, temper, character, passions, appetites, desires, and wills, etc.

JoAnn C. White



some people. ... “

Melissa: “... Oh my, that topic seems to be a very touchy subject for you. You seem so upset just recalling it. I’d like to engage the discussion further, but do you think we should wait until a better time? ...”

Sara: “... No...no...this is a good time. Can you believe that? I’ve never heard anything so ... so ... insane. Have you? ... “

Melissa: “... W-e-l-l ... I can see why the idea of having the people you love die and go to such a dreadful place would be disturbing. Or even to believe that something like that could actually happen to you; would be disturbing. But there are a few things that disturb me more than that. Sara, you have been one of my best friends for many years now. I don’t want to lose your friendship. But I’m ...”

Sara: “... Wait...wait...what are to getting ready to say? You sound like you’re preparing a “farewell” speech. Am I going to like this? Where are you going with this? ... “

Melissa: “... Well, it’s not a “farewell” speech per se; but it could have “farewell” implications. I hope not. I just wanted to let you know that the reason I’m having this conversation with you is because you are “my girl. You mean so much to me. But I’m a bit concerned about some of the things that you believe about God. We’re both grown; and we each have the “freedom of choice.” We choose what we believe, or not. I can appreciate that different people have differing perceptions of “who” God is; and I can appreciate that we may differ on “what” He will or will not do, or allow. But I think that we can both respect that the *only* opinions about God that really matters are His own. Perhaps we should find out what He says about Himself, and embrace those characteristics as true. It seems that you believe in “heaven.” And I can see why you would, it seems to be a pleasant place; and full of wonderful promises. But you don’t believe in “hell.” Everywhere ...”

Sara: “... No, I don’t believe in hell. How could a God so merciful, do such a mean and hurtful thing to people? I think it’s a ridiculous scheme, contrived by someone to try and control ignorant people. ... “

Melissa: “... Wow...you seem to have formed a pretty...well...a pretty strong opinion about that. And I respect your rights to your opinions; please know that. Can I ask you to consider a few things? ...”

Sara: “... Sure...What? ... “

Melissa: “... You believe that God is the Creator of the universe, right? Do you also believe that the universe is

a reflection of the various characteristics of God? ...”
Sara: “... Absolutely, it is foolish to believe that all of this beauty ... and wisdom ... and order ... and symmetry could have come into being any other way. ... “

Melissa: “... And to your point; take the Laws of Gravity and the Laws of Aerodynamics. Powerful, aren’t they? The cooperation of these two laws enables us to participate in air travel. You remember your last trip to Europe. ...”

Sara: “... Yes, girl, it was a beautiful trip. Next time, you’ll come with us... “

Melissa: “... We appreciate the opportunities we get from the cooperation of these two Laws. You know those beautiful cliffs at the Cape? ...”

Sara: “... I know, but did you hear about the man who jumped off one of them and died? That was just terrible ... “

Melissa: “... Yes it was. But do you ever wonder why God didn’t stop him? ...”

Sara: “... What?!?! ... “

Melissa: “... Why didn’t God catch him? Why would God allow such a horrible thing? ...”

Sara: “... Those are crazy questions, Melissa. Are you trying to blame God for what happen? That man was old enough to know the consequences of his actions; he was a lawyer for crying out loud. To the point you just made; it was the interaction of the Laws of Gravity and Aerodynamics that facilitated that outcome. An action like that is a clear violation of those two Laws. I am so sorry for his family. But there was no way for God to have stopped him. Why would you ask such an insidious question, Ms. MBA? Your thinking is beginning to scare me. ... “

Melissa: “... Welcome to the party. So it’s okay for you to accept that the Laws of Gravity and Aerodynamics have both positive and negative implications, depending on how you interact with them. Some outcomes we appreciate and some we don’t; but we respect them both as being part and parcel of the same Laws. But somehow you’ve imagined that it’s not okay to believe that God can be both merciful and just. ...”

Sara: “... No ...no ... I just don’t want to believe... that...God ...would ... “

Melissa: “... It seems as if you have chosen to accept the characteristics about God that you like; and to disregard the characteristics about God that you don’t like. And so now you have this amorphous, lop-sided concept of “God;” who is all things “kind,” and “caring,” and “giving.” But who does not have any reciprocal requirements levied on us; or any penalties

for noncompliance. We can obey God (or not); love our neighbor (or not); and the only recourse your God has is to be “merciful” to us. There is a word for that: it’s called “Idolatry,” where each person designs their “god” with only the characteristics they prefer. Now that’s scary. No other law in the universe (whether physical, biological or mechanical) behaves this way; where you can choose to observe only the ordinances you like and ignore the ones you don’t. If that were the case, perhaps none of us would stop at the red lights. It seems that you have, somehow, made a situation that is otherwise unrealistic and almost unheard of, into a characteristic of the “god” you believe in. That’s dangerous, Sara. The scriptures clearly teach us that God is Righteous (Rev. 16:5, 7; 2 Tim. 4:8; etc. KJV); and that He requires us to be Holy (1 Pet. 1:16; Lev.11:44, etc. KJV); and that He has made a way for us to meet these requirements through Jesus Christ (1 John 1:9-10; 2:1-5; St John 3:16; 17:20-26; etc. KJV). The scriptures also teach about hell and the prerequisites for attendance (Matt. 5:29-30; Matt. 10:28; etc. KJV). We can certainly choose whether or not to believe or obey them. However, what we cannot choose; is to abdicate God’s judgment against us if we do not comply. God sets before us life and death (Deut. 30:15-20 KJV); and provides a most interesting cost-benefit analysis for both choices (Deut. 28 and 29 KJV). But inevitably they are our choices. He encourages us to choose life. But if we choose otherwise, He must accommodate our decision. And His accommodations must respect the Law of Righteousness that governs His character; it will not however, conform to our misconceptions of what is right. Sara, I would admonish you to ...” <96N >

JoAnn C. White, SMHG

JEWELS



You shall SEEK ME AND FIND ME
when you have searched for me with your
whole heart.

Jeremiah 29:13 KJV



A Stumbling Block or a Stepping Stone

By David L. White

Allow me to define, for the sake of this discourse, two terms:

- *Stumbling Block* - A person, place, thing, or circumstance that poses a problem, causes us to falter, or mess up
- *Stepping Stone* - A person, place, thing, or circumstance that we *can* use to move forward

We all go through periods in our lives that can be classified as “problems.” We have situations that we would say are “bad.” We’re certainly entitled to our opinions. But are they actually “problems?” Are they really “bad?” It’s obvious that they feel bad. But it is not necessarily the case that all situations that feel “bad” are “bad.” Did you know that how you *feel* about a situation has everything to do with your *state of mind*?

Perhaps, you just received notification that your current position at work will be terminated or outsourced. Therefore, your services will no longer be needed. How do you respond to this? Is this event inherently “bad” or “good?” That would probably depend on your assessment of the outcomes. Be certain that our emotions will closely follow our perception of the situation. If we perceive that this was a “bad thing;” we may begin to calculate all of the negative outcomes. If on the other hand, we perceive that this is a “good thing;” we’d probably begin to remind ourselves of all of the reasons that this event will turn out favorably.

Now we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are

called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28 KJV by reference). If we trust this, then perhaps we would begin to look for the “good;” turning life’s events into “stepping stones.”

Proverbs (3:13 KJV paraphrased) tells us that “happy is the man that finds wisdom, and the man that gets *understanding*.” *This is God's living word, Right?* If all things work together for our good; but we don't see the happiness mentioned in Proverbs; then something could be amiss with how we understand the situation. God's Word is alive. God's directives are balanced; one promise does not nullify another. Not even grace vitiates, or invalidates the law.

Let’s take an academic view of how we understand situations. Take math, for example, When referring to a formula, equation, or relation in mathematics; instructors usually call them *problems*. “Solve problems 1-30,” or “Let's go through problems 15-60,” is usually how they are introduced. This holds consistent in basically all subjects. We learn how to solve *problems*. In science, we have hypotheses that can begin by assuming a problem. What differentiates hypotheses and theory from fact and certainty are our degrees of “understanding.”

“Understanding” is what separates problems from tools; it’s what turns stumbling blocks into stepping stones. God has very specific reasons for each *problem* we experience in our life; whether for praise, obedience, seeking direction, appropriating faith, etc.

The next *problem* you encounter, begin by asking God for direction. Believe that all things most certainly do work together for good to those who love God (appropriating faith). Let the decisions that you make and actions that you take bring glory to God. With this you will begin to turn every stumbling block into a stepping stone.



