

The Brown Street Beacon

"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,

holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)



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Mama and Daddy's Religion

It is a great blessing to have parents who are true Christians. By true Christians, I mean parents who have first, obeyed the gospel by doing what the Bible commands (*Hearing*—John 6:44-45, *Believing*—Mark 16:16, *Repent-ing*—Acts 17:30, *Confessing*—Romans 10:9-10, and being *Baptized*—Acts 2:38), and second, are really living by the Word of God and teaching their children to do the same thing. However, too often when children grow up, they end up believing exactly what their parents believe, not because of personal study, but just because it is what their parents believed. Let me be clear: there is nothing wrong with children believing what their parents believe, but it must be based on one's own investigation of God's Word.

Almost all of us were, at some point, taught by another person. If the person teaching us is knowledgeable in the Word, using the Bible to instruct us, and is someone we trust, we often end up believing what they believe. This is a natural process. We must, however, always be aware of the possibility of that person, no matter how much we love and trust them, being wrong. It is not that they would lead us astray purposely. Whatever it is that they have taught us is certainly something they sincerely believe. But it is possible that they have not rightly divided the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15). If we believe what they taught us, and make it our own conviction, we are now believing something contrary to the scriptures. If we believe the false doctrine to the point that we begin teaching it to others, we now become false teachers and put our soul in peril.

The process that I described above sometimes involves our parents. They are the teachers. We love them and trust them, and we respect their spirituality and godliness, and sometimes, without our own investigation of scripture, we accept what they teach us. Thus, we "grow up" believing some false teaching. It might go as far as becoming a part of a church or denomination that can't be found in the scriptures, but we feel okay because Mama and Daddy have always been a part of the religion, whatever it might be, and we trust them to lead us in the right direction. Millions of people are engulfed in error or are a part of some man-made church, simply because it's their Mama and Daddy's religion and they grew up with it. Many souls will be lost in this way.

What is the solution to this problem? How can you be sure that you are not believing error, or are a part of a religion that is not the religion of our Lord that can be read about in the Bible? The solution to resolving any error, whether it is doctrinal, denominational, individually believed or congregationally practiced, is always the same—turn to the Bible. Many people have taught themselves out of error, whether it is just believing a false doctrine, or being a part of a denominational church, by going to the Bible and examining their convictions and religious practices in the light of God's Word. They have done this by opening the Bible with one goal in mind, that is, coming to a knowledge of the truth on a given subject. They determined to learn the truth even if it meant realizing that their instructors are wrong; even if those instructors were their parents, or maybe a brother or sister or some other close acquaintance. It wasn't easy for them. They were faced with tough decisions,

especially when it involved family, but they followed the Bible and saved themselves from the clutches of error.

This practice of examining what we believe in the light of scriptures, is critical. Any of us can fall into error. Many have "grown up" in error. The only way out is the Word of God. Many of the Jews fell into error. The Sadducees embraced a doctrine that denied the resurrection of man and the continual existence of the soul, among other things. How did they get themselves in such a mess? Jesus told them. He said to them, "*You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God*" (Matthew 22:29). The fact that they did not know the Scriptures was their own fault. They had access to them, they just didn't study them like they should. Jesus told the Jews on another occasion, "*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me*" (John 5:39).

There is a lot of error in the religious world. In fact, much of what is considered *orthodox* is false teaching. The fact that our parents or some other loved one believes it or taught it to us, doesn't change this. Our responsibility is to search the scriptures. We will either find that what we have believed is wrong, or determine that we were correctly taught. One way or the other, our conviction will be our own, and that is how God intends for it to be.

Don

Taking Time to Think About "Tomorrow"

Jason Hardin

Today's choices are often shaped by what we are anticipating "tomorrow."

Tomorrow's anticipated hunger shapes today's grocery store shopping list

Tomorrow's forecast of rain shapes today's determination to get the lawn mowed

Tomorrow's credit card statement shapes today's credit card swipes

Tomorrow's dentist appointment shapes today's flossing

Tomorrow's marathon shapes today's diet and exercise routine

Tomorrow's project deadline shapes today's choice to turn off Netflix

Tomorrow's alarm clock shapes tonight's bedtime

Each one of us will make decisions today--some of them tiny, some of them life-altering--in view of "tomorrow."

What if we take that simple principle and use it as a lens through which to read Philippians 3?

The worth of knowing Jesus surpasses any and all fleshly accomplishments (3:8)

Through the righteousness of God that depends on faith, I can gain Christ (3:8-9)

Becoming like Jesus opens the door to the power of his resurrection (3:10-11)

Forgetting what lies behind frees me to strain forward to what lies ahead (3:12-13)

The prize of the upward call of God is an attainable goal (3:14)

God is willing and able to shape the maturity of my thinking (3:15)

I bear responsibility to accept and hold true to what he has delivered (3:16)

Setting my mind on earthly things leads to idolatry, shame, and destruction (3:19)

The citizenship of God's redeemed people is in heaven (3:20)

The promise of my Savior's coming ought to shape my present conduct (3:20-21)

God-given light is shining in Philippians 3. It illuminates the possibilities, glories, and tragedies of "tomorrow." In profound ways, today's choices will be shaped by the forethought I am willing to give and the sacrifices I am willing to make in view of "tomorrow."

For whatever one sows, that will he also reap. (Gal 6:7)

Which begs the question: Will I be happy "tomorrow" with the choices I made today?