

THE



"Therefore said he unto them, 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 10:2)

September 1987

No. 021

USING THE SILENT TREATMENT

"... a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;"(Eccl. 3:7). Generally, mankind has recognized the value of silence. There is a proper time to speak-up and a better time to hush-up. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."(Prov. 25:11) As man grows older and wiser, he understands even more the value of controlling his tongue. "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles."(Prov. 21:23)

We see the Bible is full of scriptures which praises the man who uses his words carefully and sparingly. *"He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit."(Prov. 17:27) "But let your*

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communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (Matt. 5:37) "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." (Col. 4:6)

Then there are other verses which warn men concerning the evils of the tongue. A few of these are: "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction ... If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain ... For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:" (Prov. 13:3; Jas. 1:26; 1 Pet. 3:10)

Knowing when to practice silence is an art in itself. How many times have we been guilty of sticking the old "foot in the mouth"? More than we care to count, of course. But some people have used "silence" to an extreme. They use it as a weapon against others. What we are referring to is commonly called giving the "Silent Treatment". Have you ever experienced it?

It usually happens, for whatever reason, that a person will get his feelings hurt by another or he may get mad. So the one who has been hurt or sinned against will try to get revenge (some justify it by saying they are getting "even"). Unfortunately, this feeling of retaliation occurs even among brethren of the church. Sometimes members refuse to talk to other members because of something that happened "a long time ago".

By dwelling in silence, a person can look for sympathy. The outward appearance of looking humble (being silent and hanging a head down) allows one to really dwell in his own self-pity. It is as if he is telling everyone

around him, "Look at how sad I am and look at what So-and-so did to helpless little me."

In actuality, the Silent Treatment works as a weapon. When directed at a certain person, it ignores his existence by pretending not to hear him. It refuses to acknowledge the presence of that person. Yet, one of our basic needs as human beings is to interact with other humans and we greatly desire responses from one another. The Silent Treatment takes away all this. See how cruel "the sounds of silence" can be when we misuse it?

Friends, if we do have a problem or a disagreement or a difference of opinion with a brother, that is no reason to make an enemy of that brother. We need to talk things out. The Bible encourages us to do that, as we will soon note. But don't resort to the Silent Treatment. That is what spoiled children use when they do not get their accustomed ways. Have we not matured past that point, especially if we are brothers and sisters in Christ?

The Lord gave us a scriptural method to settle our differences. *"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."*(Matt. 18:15-17)

The key to solving all our quarrels starts with human forgiveness. This is exactly what we read in the next passage of Matthew 18. *"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive*

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him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but Until seventy times seven."(vs. 21-22) Christians do not practice the "Silent Treatment" when a brother wrongs them once or twice. No matter how terrible it gets, *"if he repent, forgive him"*(Luke 17:3). Christ stresses this point by then telling us the parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matt. 18:23-35).

So let us not be the types who hold grudges by using the Silent Treatment. *"Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door."*(Jas. 5:9) We all think of Cain as being totally evil. We associate his name with being the first murderer. But I have found that he did do ONE thing commendable -- he tried to first talk things out with his brother, which is more than some brethren are willing to do today. *"And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."*(Gen. 4:8) Have we really tried to make things right with our brother or sister in Christ? Or have we been using the "Silent Treatment" as a weapon?

RAY

Articles for this paper are solicited. If you can help spread the Truth, it would be most appreciated -- Editor.

FROM THE SCRIPTURES ...

ABOUT OLD AGE

Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season. (Job 5:26)

And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning. (Job 11:17)

With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding. (Job 12:12)

Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come. (Psa. 71:18)

The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. (Psa. 90:10)

They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; (Psa. 92:14)

The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. (Prov. 16:31)

And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you. (Isa. 46:4)

That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; (Titus 2:2,3)

To see God in everything makes life the greatest adventure there is.

"HOW READEST THOU?"
(Luke 10:26)

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, *Almost thou persuadedst me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.*"
(Acts 26:28,29)

Anyone who has heard the plan of salvation taught is certainly familiar with this passage. It shows how one man, king Agrippa, came very close to becoming a Christian. There is even a song written about it:

Almost cannot avail;
Almost is but to fail;
Sad, sad, that bitter wail--
Almost but lost!

Preachers, at the close of a sermon, will use this scripture to demonstrate how near some can get to obeying the gospel. "*Almost thou persuadedst me to be a Christian.*" Paul came within inches of converting Agrippa. Or so we have been taught by our speakers. I have never heard it explained any other way.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance defines the word "almost" as: almost, briefly, few, a little, long, a season, short, small, a while. Thayer gives the meaning of "almost" as used in Acts 26:28 to be: easily, without much effort. Isn't this contrary to what we have been led to believe? Instead of saying that Paul "nearly" convinced Agrippa to become a Christian, the passage seems to indicate that Agrippa was astonished at Paul for trying to convert him with "so few words, in such a short time".

Before we go into shock, let us note what some of the other versions of the Bible have to say about Acts 26:28,29.

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION -- Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" Paul replied, "Short time or long--I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."

REVISED STANDARD VERSION -- And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time you think to make me a Christian!" And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am--except for these chains."

MODERN LANGUAGE VERSION --- Agrippa turned to Paul, "You with a few words are trying to persuade me to be a Christian?" Then Paul said, "I would pray to God that whether with a few words or with many not you alone but all who are now listening to me today might be in my condition--not including these shackles."

TODAY'S ENGLISH VERSION -- Agrippa said to Paul, "In this short time you think you will make me a Christian?" "Whether a short time or a long time," Paul answered, "my prayer to God is that you and all the rest of you who are listening to me today might become what I am--except, of course, for these chains!"

NEW ENGLISH BIBLE -- Agrippa said to Paul, 'You think it will not take much to win me over and make a Christian of me.' 'Much or little,' said Paul, 'I wish to God that not only you, but all those also who are listening to me today, might become what I am, apart from these chains.'

Please don't take my word for this different insight of a familiar passage or what anybody else has said. I want you for yourself to study and search the "scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11) In effect, consider all the evidence and tell me, "how readest thou?"

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
Sept. 6-11	Rich Hill Church near Liberty, KY	V.W. Boland (Gadsden, AL)
Sept. 11-13	Freefield Church State Line, MS	Zack Michini (Lucedale, MS)
Sept. 11-13 (F-Su)	Godby Road Atlanta, GA	Chris Melton Dana Chandler Marty Livingston Greg Moore
Sept. 13-18	Estesburg Church near Somerset, KY	V.W. Boland (Gadsden, AL)
Sept. 21-26	Mt. Zion Church Crab Orchard, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

At a gospel meeting on August 9-14, Bro. James McDonald preached the Word at Brushy Creek church near Lucedale, MS. Seeds were planted and watered during the week and according to I Cor. 3:6-7 God gave the increase in the following manner:

Ten souls came up for baptism

Richard Dale Clark
Barbra Davis
Alice Holliman
Edward Holliman
Elaine Holliman
Mark Holliman
Marshall Holliman
Roger Holliman
Ulysses Michini
Bennett Riley

Twelve souls came up for prayers of the church

Audell Clark
Walter Clark
Marjorie Davis
Cecilia Haviland
Jerry Hite
Patsy Hite
Nell Holliman
Henry Hyde
Tammy Hyde
Sara Michini
Zack Michini
Bonnie Riley

God bless these twenty-two and help us all to be fruitful laborers in his harvest.