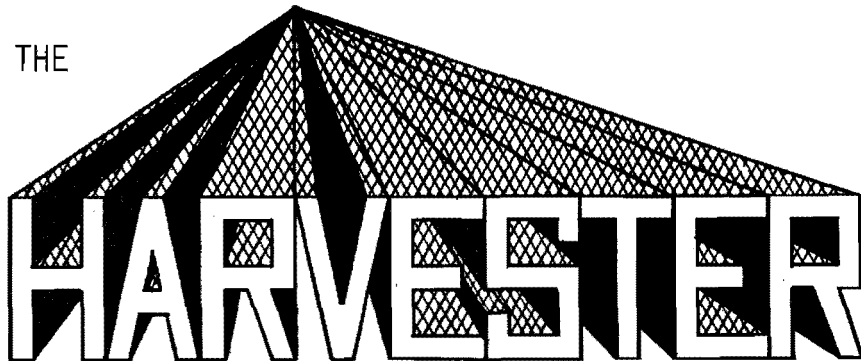


THE



"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)

December 1989

No. 048

DOUBLE STANDARDS

Have you ever heard anyone use the phrase, "do as I say not as I do?" Many people really seem to live by this principle. They will tell you how something should be done, but then will turn around and do something totally different themselves. Many claim to hold certain principles and values and will even strongly encourage others to follow them. Yet these people continually violate these principles that they claim to hold so sacred. In short they are not "practicing what they are preaching."

You even see people in the church who behave in this fashion. They continually talk about being a Christian, yet in their life they do not follow the principles of Christ. Christ Himself rebuked the Jews for behaving in this

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manner. *"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."* (Matthew 15:8) Many people do indeed honor the Lord with their mouths. They boldly proclaim to love Him and serve Him. But their heart is not in what they are saying. They are far more interested in their own pleasure and satisfaction than they are in pleasing the Lord.

Unfortunately it probably seems to many people in the world that all Christians behave this way. They have seen certain television evangelists become involved in the very same sins that they have preached against so vehemently. They may have very well known someone with the "holier than thou" attitude. There are many people who are so pious and self righteous, that it's a wonder they can fit their ego into the church building. And people of the world see all of this happening. It gives religion as a whole a sort of "black eye." It is hard to take anything seriously when everyone you have seen associated with it seems to be hypocritical. And even if someone sees fifty "good" Christians and one "bad" Christian, they will most likely remember the one more than the fifty.

We must be extremely careful to put into action those principles and ideals we say we believe in. You never know who may be watching what you are doing, although you can be certain the Lord is. Often parents fail to do this with their children. A father will stand there and, as he lights a cigarette, tell his son that he will kick him out of his house if he ever catches him smoking. There are many other things that parents will do, yet absolutely forbid their children to do. How is a child supposed to interpret these mixed signals? If you notice most often the child ends up following in his parents' footsteps.

Here is an example of how some people employ double standards. They will talk about how disgusted they are when someone uses vulgar language around them. They will even tell you that they will ask someone not to use that type of language in their presence. But what are you to think when the same person will pay money to hear these very same words? And especially when they most often take their family with them! If something is offensive in one situation, then how does it suddenly become unoffensive in another? I'm talking about going to see the filth that is paraded in front of our eyes in movie theatres today. And I'm not talking about R-rated movies either. The supposedly tame PG and PG-13 rated movies will normally contain just about any word that you would care not to hear. And as if this weren't enough, most of these movies will also contain some partial or even full nudity. How can a parent teach their children that it is wrong for them to do all of these things that they are constantly encouraging them to look at? And I cannot even justify adults seeing them alone. Why must we fill our mind with such, when we could be filling it with God's word?

Often people just sincerely do not realize what they are doing. They simply do not stop and think about all the aspects of something they are participating in. But we must try to be ever mindful of the contents of our thoughts, words and actions. *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."* (II Corinthians 13:5a) We should examine ourselves using the same standards that we expect everyone else to meet. Often someone will have certain views as to what constitutes proper behavior. And they will think poorly of another if their behavior fails to come up to their standards. But yet this same person will often violate his own principles and think nothing of

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it. But if something is wrong for another, then it's wrong for you!

How does it look if brother Smith goes to brother Jones, who is a weak brother, and encourages him to be more faithful in his attendance of the worship services. Then when brother Jones does come he finds that brother Smith didn't come. Surely he will say to himself, "Why should I worry about being faithful if brother Smith doesn't?" Although brother Smith said all the right things, his actions completely nullify his words. It doesn't matter what we say or how well we say it, if our actions do not back up what we say, then we have wasted our breath.

Often when someone is sick and in the hospital, they become very upset because few people bother to come visit them. They don't stop to think though, that they haven't been to visit anyone in years who was sick. They were always too busy to go, yet now that they are the ones who are sick, they expect everyone to drop what they are doing and rush to see them. We have no right to become upset at someone if they do not treat us better than we have treated them.

As the old saying suggests, our actions do speak louder than our words. People will often quickly forget what we say, but will long remember what we do. If we say we are a Christian, then we should act like a Christian. If we say

something is wrong, then we should not do it. If we tell our children not to do something, then we should not do it ourselves. In summation, we should never advocate the adherence to certain principles unless we are willing to follow them ourselves. Practice what you preach!

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. When the ark was being moved to Jerusalem, who was struck dead when he touched it?
2. Where did Samson stay after he avenged the death of his wife?
3. According to Romans 2, who has no excuse?
4. What are the customs of people worth, according to Jeremiah?
5. What is the shortest book in the N.T.?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who was David and Bathsheba's second son?
SOLOMON (2 Sam. 12:24)
2. According to Deuteronomy, where was Israel to worship God? THE PLACE WHICH THE LORD GOD WOULD CHOOSE (Deut. 12:5)
3. Why does God comfort us in our afflictions?
SO WE MAY COMFORT OTHERS (2 Cor. 1:4)
4. What happened to Paul that caused him to first preach to the churches of Galatia?
HE WAS SICK (Gal. 4:13-14)
5. Did Hannah bear other children after Samuel?
YES (1 Sam. 2:21)

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

During his first defense at Rome, Paul experienced a somewhat lonely feeling. There he stood before Caesar's court and now it seemed that all his companions had deserted him. *"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge."*(2 Tim. 4:16) Where had everybody gone and why? Perhaps some were away on business but others had fled for fear. Nonetheless, bound in chains, the prisoner Paul stood his ground. He had preached the Truth, *"Christ and Him crucified"*. He was *"not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"* (Rom. 1:16). Why should he be frightened if the whole world was after him? Yet, he was not as lonely as it appeared. Paul assured Timothy, *"Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."*(2 Tim. 4:17)

There will be times when we likewise preach the Word of God and it will not be favorably received by the world. Close friends will desert us, refusing to be associated with "that freak." The same thing happened to Jesus when He was arrested (Matt. 26:56). And just as Elijah felt he was the only prophet of God left (1 Ki. 19:10), there are also congregations of the Lord in remote areas feeling the same loneliness. They have studied the Bible, followed the pattern, and stood up for the Truth while everyone else runs rampant in sin. *"I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop."* (Psa. 102:7) Does that verse describe our current condition? Are we feeling alone because, in our efforts to follow the New Testament pattern, we are different and 'peculiar'?

Perhaps then, to avoid the loneliness, should we forsake the scriptural teachings and join the multitudes and do "what everyone else is doing?" No! Continue in the Truth and stand firm in the faith. We are not really alone in this world. Even when all others leave us, our Father constantly remains by our side. Jesus, in His darkest hour, had this same blessed assurance. *"Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."*(John 16:32) Therefore, let us always be encouraged to *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine"*(2 Tim. 4:2) because the Lord will *"never leave thee, nor forsake thee"*(Heb. 13:5).

RAY

[Editor's Note: The Harvester does continue to grow! With the completion of our fourth year, our mailing list is now a healthy "862". This number could not have been achieved without your help: those who shared this paper with others and those who sent in 'names:!' Let's keep this good work going in 1990! As always, we can never extend enough thanks to those who contributed articles during this year of 1989. They are: Buster Boyd, Miles E. Busby, Harry Cobb, Alex Frederick, J.O. Holmes, Marty Livingston, Robert Phillips, and Tony Whiddon. If you have an article that will edify and strengthen our readers, please send it to me. We can never get enough "good news" these days.]

THE ONLY SAFE AND SURE WAY TO DESTROY AN ENEMY
IS TO MAKE HIM YOUR FRIEND.

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
Dec. 1-3	West Broad Street Wedowee, AL / 7:00 pm	Jim Pritchard (Tecumseh, OK)

% %

'Twas Two Hours Before Worship ...
and all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring, not even my spouse,
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
No visions of Heaven danced in their heads.
Ma in her curlers, and I, what a sap!
Had just settled down, "Dick Tracy" in my lap.
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my chair to see what was the matter.
And what to my wondering eyes should appear
My neighbor's lawn mower and it in high gear.
And I thought to myself and just had to say
Just a fool would save this for the Lord's own day.
As I nodded my head and was turning around
I looked in the mirror and saw with a frown
A round little mouth drawn up in a bow,
Stubbornness, conceit, that I only should know.
I haven't been to worship since -- what was the day?
The day before mamma went on her good way.
I'm a part of the church, have a spouse that would go,
And we all could have spirits as white as the snow.
I woke up my mate, and said, "How about you?"
She smiled and said, "Evening services, too."
We spoke not a word but went right to work,
Dressed up all the kids and they were so pert.
They heard us exclaim as we drove out of sight,
"TO SERVICES THIS MORNING -- ANOTHER TONIGHT."

You are always Welcome at
MOFFAT ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST
SUNDAY Worship Services
10:00 am and 6:00-pm
WEDNESDAY 7:00 pm