

Trends

A growing number of Christians don't see sharing the good news as a personal responsibility. Only 10% of Christians (1993) agreed with the statement "converting people to Christianity is the job of the local church"—as opposed to the job of an individual (i.e., themselves). Twenty-five years later (2018), 29% of Christians say evangelism is the local church's responsibility, a nearly threefold increase. The most dramatic divergence over time is on the statement, "Every Christian has a responsibility to share their faith." In 1993, 89% of 10 Christians who had shared their faith agreed. Today, just 64% say so—a 25-point drop.

- via The Barna Group

1 Peter 3:15: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;"

Sentence Sermons

"Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter." —Charles Spurgeon

News & Notes

- Pray for one another: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)
- Please consider donating funds to Zach & Taya Martin. Zach is a medical student and he and his wife Taya are planning to assist Ron Halbrook on one of his preaching trips to the Philippines. The Martins are worthy of our support. You can contact Zach at: zcmartin30@gmail.com.
- Please pray for one another! "comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- Please pray for Ryan & Jennifer and the brethren of the Northern Michigan church of Christ. They are now meeting in their newly purchased building in Roscommon, Michigan.
- Please keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets a great example and gives encouragement to all! Ditto for Al (our Barnabas!).
- Pray for all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.
- Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



Are the Scriptures Sufficient?

Ryan Thomas

Was Jesus just a man? What must I do to be saved? Can I be a member of just any church and get to heaven? Do I really have to be baptized? These are just a few questions that are of monumental importance to each and every living soul on the earth today and must be answered. But who or what can provide the answers we so desperately need? We know "it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23) and as a result we must not and do err exceedingly when we look to ourselves for the answers. So where can we go and learn what God would have of us? The answer is simple; to his holy word, the Bible. The Bible tell us "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be **complete, thoroughly** equipped for every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16-17). How simple, how perfect, how complete! Everything we need to know to please God is found in one place, the Bible!

We could end this article right here, however, there are some who are not content with just going by the Bible. Many have sought to find something more. Some claim to receive special revelations directly from God Himself; some write creeds and catechisms; some impose the decisions of councils, synods, and conventions on their fellow man. The Bible says in 2 Peter 1:3, "According as his divine power hath given us **all** things that pertain to life and godliness." Where does that leave Vatican decrees, the various denominational creeds and confessions of faith, the book of Mormon, and the innumerable visions, councils and revelations of men? Well, if the Bible contains **all** things that pertain to **life and godliness** these other things must pertain to **death and ungodliness**! If the scriptures have the power to furnish us "unto all **good** works", then these others must furnish us unto **evil** works! We do not seek to be rude or unkind, but it would be impossible for an honest person to reach any other conclusion (1 Pet. 4:11). We know from Jude 3 that God's word has been delivered to us "once for all", that is one time for all time. His word is the only thing that can lead us to eternal salvation (Acts 20:32, Jas. 1:21) and the only thing to which we will be held accountable in the day of judgment (Jn. 12:48, Rom. 2:16). Let us be content to simply go by the Bible and have it be our only guide (Psa. 109:105, 130).

Baptist Doctrine and Galatians 6:7, 8

Larry Ray Hafley

Do you believe Galatians 6:7, 8? *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”* (Gal. 6:7, 8). The text does not say that the principles of sowing and reaping only apply to alien sinners, to unbelievers. No, the laws of sowing and reaping are universal and eternal. Thus, whatsoever any man sows, whether he be a Christian or not, *“that shall he also reap.”*

Do you believe that *“whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap?”* Do you believe that *“he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption?”* Do you believe that only those who sow *“to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting?”* If your answer to the questions above is, “Yes, I believe Galatians 6:7, 8,” then you are not a Baptist, or if you are, you do not believe the Baptist doctrine of “once saved, always saved.” See what Sam Morris, a Baptist preacher, said in his tract entitled, **“Do A Christian’s Sins Damn His Soul?”**

“We take the position that a Christian’s sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of its soul....All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong-to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger....Salvation is settled once and for all when we believe....The way I live has nothing whatsoever to do with the salvation of my soul.”

Sam Morris’s statement denies what God said in Ezekiel 3:20, *“When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity...he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered.”* It also contradicts Ezekiel 33:18, *“When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.”*

One must decide whether he shall believe the word of God or the word of men. Condemning me for pointing out the contrast between Baptist doctrine and Bible doctrine will not do away with the irreconcilable differences between the statements cited above. Does ridiculing this article make Baptist doctrine any less contradictory of the word of God? Does it make Sam Morris’s statement true? Is it right for Baptists to teach that one may commit every sin “from idolatry to murder” and still go to heaven, but wrong for me to point out how their belief makes void the very word of God itself?

We appeal for honest hearts to reject the errors of men and to receive the truth of God. One’s refusal to do so will not do away with God’s immutable, irrefutable law that *“whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”*

“You Who Are Spiritual”

Steve Wallace

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a

one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1).

Our text is a familiar one and often cited. Here we center on the words found in the title of this article. Those who are spiritual are obviously Christians whom our Lord finds useful. They will not make light of sin. In churches where they are members they are not problems but solutions to problems. In our text they are the ones designated by the apostle to help erring Christians. The words of Galatians 6:1 are born of their context.

1. Those who are spiritual *“walk in the Spirit”* (5:16) and *“are led by the Spirit”* (5:18). Those who mind the flesh find it difficult to walk in the Spirit (1 Cor. 3:1, NAS; cf 1 Cor. 2:11-14). Those who follow the Spirit are *“filled with the knowledge of His will”* and use *“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”* in their service to God (Col. 1:9; Eph. 6:17).

2. Those who are spiritual recognize sin. Paul’s words in Galatians 6:1 imply this. He has just finished listing many sins which he termed *“the works of the flesh”* (5:19-21). Some Christians, especially young Christians, may be ignorant of given sins. Others may be careless or overtaken in a sin. Sins found in 5:19-21 *“and the like”* are, sadly, also found among brethren in our day. Those who are spiritual help sinners to see the error of their ways (Acts 8:20-22; Gal. 2:14). It is a mark of spirituality to know what sin is and recognize when it has been committed.

3. Those who are spiritual restore sinners. Some downplay or ignore sin (1 Cor. 5:1,2). Some are like the scribes and Pharisees who recognized sin but stood aloof from those who were sinners (Lk. 5:30). There is a danger of such things today. Those who are spiritual realize that restoring sinners was our Lord’s great work and that He expects His people to follow in His steps (Lk.5:32; 1 Tim. 2:4,5; Gal. 6:1).

The scriptures teach us how to restore sinners. Though Acts 2 is a record of lost sinners being converted, Peter’s words there are a helpful companion to Paul’s words in Galatians 6:1. Peter reasoned from the scriptures and made application to those listening (Acts 2:22-36). Those who are spiritual use the scriptures to show erring brethren their sin and encourage them in the way of restoration (Acts 8:22; 1 Jno. 1:9). They are concerned about the spirit part of others (Jas. 5:19,20).

4. Those who are spiritual have the *“fruit of the Spirit”* (5:22,23). Let us note some that Galatians 6:1 implies. Love and longsuffering are obvious in the time, care, energy, etc., involved in restoring the erring. Gentleness is mentioned in 6:1. Faithfulness, both to God and the erring one, is seen in the effort made to restore. Self-control would be necessary to exercise the restraint necessary to keep oneself from being tempted.

5. Those who are spiritual are focused on things beyond this world. Moses exemplified such focus (Heb. 11:27). Paul’s list of sins in 5:19-21 ends with *“those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”* Those who are spiritual focus on the final destiny of others.

Let us all be spiritual. Such Christians will be the lights that Jesus calls His people to be.