

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA.55:10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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CHRISTIAN INDIVIDUALISM

The God-inspired declaration of the Apostle Paul tells us that all who determine to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). In most lands today, this persecution will usually take the form of disfellowshipping, ostracism, separation, misrepresentation and misunderstanding of one's high and holy purpose. Along these same lines, I would add that if anyone does determine to live godly in Christ Jesus, he will have to do it as an individual. The one who gives his time searching for some group or company that is living godly in Christ Jesus, and to which he may attach himself, is doomed in advance to failure and disappointment.

Put it down for a positive fact that the average professing Christian is not interested in living godly in Christ Jesus. He spends most of his time seeking for ways to live worldly in Christ, to make a "fun thing" or a "money thing" of his professed connection with the Lord.

A most positive aspect of living godly in Christ Jesus is that the one who has so determined has "chosen the way of truth" (Psa. 119:30). He joins the Lord Jesus in saying, "**Thy Word is truth**" (John 17:17). And once this choice has been made, the only question that can ever be asked concerning any teaching or practice is, "Is it the truth?" If it is, it must be embraced and declared; if not, it must be repudiated.

It should be understood in advance that the determination to live godly in Christ Jesus, and the choice of "the truth way" rather than "the church way" is not an easy road to travel. It could be a very bnesome road. So, if one cannot decide in advance that, through the help of Jesus Christ, he can accept the isolation, the ostracism, and the misunderstanding that may come from following such a course, he had better not start upon it. He would

probably be happier if he simply cast his lot with some like-minded group of "food, fun, and fellowship" seekers. If one is going to be miserable living the life of a Christian individualist, he had better find some other way of life.

If, among those who read these lines, there are those who have had a true encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ; if they have judged themselves as sinners and received Him as their Savior; if they have come face-to-face with the fact of God's Truth versus man's error; if they have chosen the way of Truth, and it has become their determination to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ they will find it necessary to find a way of life in Christ Jesus that will allow them to live out to the limit the relationship which they now bear to God through Him. If Jesus Christ, rather than some sect or denomination, is to be the mold of their lives, I recommend to them *Christian Individualism* as being the true and best way of life for the active believer in Christ Jesus.

The believer whose knowledge of the Bible is ever increasing, whose appreciation of the person and work of Jesus Christ is ever-growing, with this resulting in a determination to give Him the preeminence in all things, will find that he quickly becomes *persona non grata* (an unacceptable person) in any church today. His unwillingness to go along with the popular schemes and make-work activities of today's religions will cause him to be branded as a divisive factor, and any protests he makes will bring the charge that he is a troublemaker.

The churches want bodies to help swell the attendance; they welcome purses that will help with the finances, but they insist that everything that means so much to the active believer in Christ must be forgotten and left at home. He can play and he can pay but is allowed nothing to say. And if he insists in raising his voice in protest, he can expect a visit from the board of deacons who will insist that he keep quiet and conform or else face a more drastic action. This can be such a frightening prospect to many that they will seek to avoid it at any cost. So, they become amenable and complacent, usually giving as an excuse that they are doing it for the sake of their families.

However, for many others, such compromises are impossible. The truth as it is in Christ Jesus means more to them than any organization, and they cannot remain silent when grievous errors and practices are promulgated. Thus, the only course open to them is one of Christian individualism. This

means a commitment to Christ and to His Word while standing apart from any commitment to any religious body.

It has been my joy to recommend this way of life to many believers in Christ. It is my belief and my experience that it is the privilege of any individual to establish relationship with Jesus Christ in which all that He can ever be to any man in this dispensation, His rich blessings, and fellowship can be enjoyed wholly apart from any institution called a church. Such things as nearness to God, likeness to Christ, devotedness to His Word, and separation from the world can all be attained and maintained by the individual believer in Jesus Christ without his being any part of an organized company. The believer can be attached to Christ, to His Name, to His Word, yes, even to His people, without being any part of any church. I offer my own life as proof of this.

The primary value of Christian individualism is that it permits a faithful presentation of Jesus Christ to others. It permits one's eye to be single when he seeks to win men to Christ. There is no demand upon him to bring men to Christ and also into some church.

He is able to plead God's cause and feels no need of pleading the cause of any church or denomination.

Christian individualism lifts a man to a position of sublime independence of all the religions of this world. The Christian individualist knows that a man can be joined to God through Jesus Christ, and that he does not need to face or become involved in all the divergent issues created by religious organizations. He knows the satisfying value of having gone directly to God, knowing no intermediary but Jesus Christ, His Son, and no other authority save the written Word of God. He smilingly refuses the officious cries of churchmen who declare that he cannot have Christ as his Savior until he has first acknowledged and received them.

The Christian faith was from the very first the personal faith of individuals. This is clearly seen in the declaration of Paul who tells us that after God's dealings with him on the Damascus road, he did not confer with any human being. Neither did he go up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before him; but he went into Arabia, then later came back to Damascus (see Gal. 1:15-19).

The believers of the Acts period were not always scattered; and wherever possible, they moved and acted as a fellowship of individuals. But when one of them found himself cut off from all others, he stood alone, finding his all in Christ.

Before determining to live godly in Christ Jesus, before choosing the way of truth, before starting out on the path of Christian individualism, the believer had better make sure that he can "go it alone" spiritually. It may be necessary for him to do this. Let him be determined in advance that he is able to say with godly Asaph of old: **"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee"** (Psalm 73:25).

Christian individualism is a way of life, not a way of escape. It consists of that which an active believer in Christ does, not what he does not do. Therefore, let no careless, loveless, prayerless, antisocial individual take refuge in it. Let no sports enthusiast, Sunday morning golfer, fisherman, or television addict adopt it in order to free himself for the pursuit of his pleasures. Let not the stingy use it as a way to stop all giving. Let no one take this high and holy position unless his life, from that day on, is to be lived for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Quite a few believers who have considered Christian individualism as a way of life have asked about fellowship with other believers. And to this there is only one answer - fellowship with others to the very limit. Christian individualism is not an anti-social way of life. Do not hesitate to go anywhere, where you can find and be of help to other believers. However, if you find that such associations are causing you to compromise or keep quiet in regard to things you know to be the truth, better withdraw from them at once.

Remember, **"Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. . . . If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin"** (1 John 1:3-7).

So, after all has been said, and all arguments pro and con have been exhausted, there is only one method of dealing with God in this dispensation; and that method is personally and individually. This is the way

we must start, and. this is the way we should continue. In this way of life, we can best fulfill our position as believers in an unbelieving world, as godly men in an immoral world, as students of God's Word in a world that is Biblically illiterate.

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