

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

NOT A DUEL, BUT A DUET

Carroll B. Ellis

One of the most neglected principles in the lives of all of us is submission. We are so constituted that we want to have our way and be the “boss.” There is no way up without going down. There is no path to success except through submission. Submission is so important. Paul equates it with a right relationship to the Lord. “Submitting yourselves,” writes Paul, “one to another in the fear of God” (Eph. 5:21). Any institution or person who has authority is defined by some as seeking to destroy freedom and liberty. There is no such thing as happiness, however, where liberty is defined as life without restraint. Four areas of submission are emphasized in the Bible.

SUBMISSION IN THE HOME

There must be submission in the home. The fifth chapter of the Ephesian letter clearly states:

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body (Eph. 5:22, 23).

Submission on the part of the wife is not degrading but ennobling. Christ is in submission to God. The man is in submission to Christ. The wife is in submission to man and the children are in submission unto their parents (Eph. 6:1, 2).

The Women’s Liberation Movement has sought to cast the Bible and particularly the apostle Paul into the light of “male chauvinism.” They either attempt to

discredit the Bible altogether or to say that what Paul says in Ephesians 5 was merely a local custom. This is not the backdrop against which some important truth is revealed, but it is the truth itself because Paul says, “Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Tim. 2:11, 12). This is traced back to the Garden of Eden and to the fall.

A careful reading of Ephesians 5 actually points to subjection in such a way as to ennoble all of the members of the family.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself (Eph. 5:25, 28).

Actually, Paul is saying the woman is superior at being a woman and the man is superior at being a man. In the home there is to be a duet and not a duel. Submission is not demeaning but enriching.

SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT

We are to be in submission to government. “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers,” writes Paul. “For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom. 13:1). If everybody in a nation did what he wanted to do, there would be chaos and confusion. Paul was writing the thirteenth chapter of Romans in a time of despotism, but subjection to governmental authority is superior to chaos. The apostle Peter says:

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well (1 Pet. 2:13, 14).

SUBMISSION IN BUSINESS

Submission is a key word in business relationships. Using slavery as the backdrop against which he writes, Paul says:

Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men (Col. 3:22, 23).

If you are not getting along with your boss, it might be because you are not in submission unto him. Any business organization which functions smoothly has to exist on the basis of authority. This authority must be correctly administered. The presence of it is essential for success.

SUBMISSION IN THE CHURCH

Christians are to be in submission to the elders of the congregation where they worship.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you (Heb. 13:17).

Some congregations have been split and divided because people have not recognized the authority of the elders or bishops of a local congregation. The only way that the body can function as a body is by coordinating movement. This coordination must come from obedience to the elders of the congregation.

Of course, there is an exception with reference to submission. We can never submit to anyone who is attempting to cause us to do something which is wrong in the sight of God. When Peter and John were told not to preach, their answer was, **“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

The principle of submission does not take away human dignity but enhances it. Harmony always comes when everyone is doing his job to the fullest and when God’s plan is followed. Without submission to proper authority, there is fear, confusion, and little or no progress. I need to ask myself, just as you do, **“Am I living a life which shows proper submission?”** Only then can all of life exist in beautiful harmony.

—Deceased

BAD PRINT ABOUT THE BLUEPRINT

J. Noel Merideth

We have through the years called for unity on the basis of a return to the New Testament. Christians have viewed the New Testament as a “blueprint” which is to be followed in exact detail in every age of history. A blueprint as here used means a “detailed outline or plan.” We should be just as detailed as the New Testament blueprint.

There are now those among us who deny the New Testament is the blueprint for the church. There are also those who claim there are contradictions between Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, “misprints” or errors. The editor of one of our religious journals has denied the New Testament was ever intended to serve as a blueprint for church organization and worship. We regard articles against the New Testament as a blueprint and charges of contradictions in the New Testament as “bad print” against the “blueprint.” The church belongs to Jesus Christ, He established the church and He is the head of the church (Mat. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:22, 23). The only way we can possibly know the organization and worship of the Lord’s church as the Lord would have us to do it is from what we read in the New Testament. In fact there is no way to know Jesus except from the Book. What can we possibly know about Christ or His church except what we read in the Bible? Those who belittle “book religion,” and “pattern,” and “blueprint” have evidently forgotten this. Religion becomes a modern tower of Babel when we leave off learning about Jesus and His church from the New Testament.

All authority in religion begins with Almighty God. God gave all this authority to Jesus Christ (Mat. 28:18-20). Christ revealed His will to the apostles and other inspired men (Gal. 1:11, 12; 1 Cor. 2:9-13). These inspired men wrote the doctrine of Christ in an inspired book—the New Testament. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:3, 4; 20, 21; 3:16). Nearly fifty times we read of the “**scripture**” and the “**scriptures.**” And almost fifty times we read also of the “**written**” word of God. It is a sin for men to add to the Lord’s word, take from it, or substitute anything else for it (Deu. 4:2; 2 John 9-11; Rev. 22:18, 19). It is vain religion to try to worship and serve God according to the “**commandments of men**” (Mat. 15:9; Mark 7:6-13). The New Covenant of Christ is certainly our blueprint.

Every single law that God has ever ordained, which has to do with the soul of man, is contained in a single book—the Bible. The fact that He is God is assurance

enough that we have His will, and that His will must be carried out in detail if we are to be pleasing in His sight.

Paul left Timothy at Ephesus to “**charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine**” (1 Tim. 1:3; cf. 6:3, 4). Later, he wrote to Timothy, “**Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus**” (2 Tim. 1:13). If Christianity is not ordered after a distinctive pattern or blueprint, how would Timothy be able to hold the pattern of sound words and be able to determine a different doctrine? From what would it differ if not from the true doctrine or the blueprint?

Paul writes to the Corinthians that they are not to go beyond the things which are *written* (1 Cor. 4:6). The Corinthians were to be of the “**same**” mind and in the “**same judgment.**” There were not supposed to be “**divisions**” among them, they were to “**all speak the same thing**” (1 Cor. 1:10). Paul gave orders that all the churches were to carry out (1 Cor. 14:37; 7:7; 16:1). That sounds like a blueprint. James writes:

But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing (Jam. 1:25).

We thus have a perfect blueprint by which we are to order our lives. God is perfect, He made no mistakes; Christ made no mistakes; the Holy Spirit made no mistakes. The work which deity produced the New Testament, must have the characteristic of perfection. Hence, the original manuscripts of the New Testament were free from error. There are many alleged discrepancies, but no real ones. There are some passages that are hard to understand, but there are *no contradictions*. Many of the alleged discrepancies between Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the product of the imagination of critics, who are influenced in a great degree by dogmatic prejudice. If there is a *possible* explanation then no contradiction can be affirmed. Actually, difficulties about the text of the New Testament arise from: (1) failure to understand the words, (2) failure to determine the speaker, (3) failure to consider the context, (4) failure to consider other passages, (5) failure to understand figures of speech, and (6) failure to get sufficient information. The psalmist declared: “**The sum of thy word is truth; And every one of thy righteous ordinances endureth for ever**” (Psa. 119:160). Jesus said,

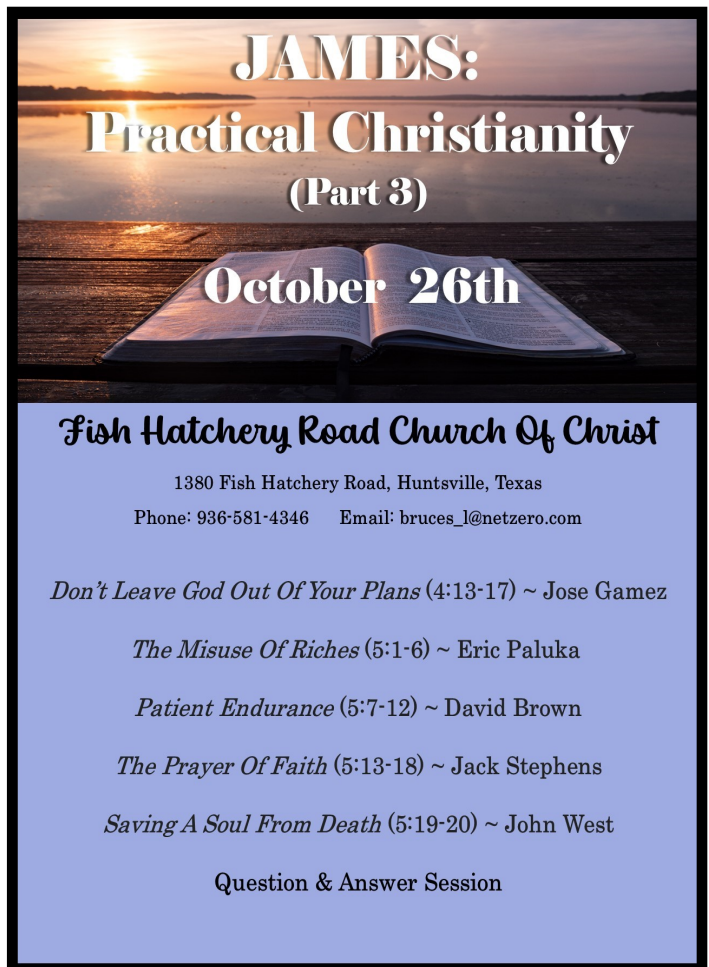
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“Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). And, “the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35).

Modernism, which mutilates the Bible and minimizes sin and humanizes God and deifies man, assaulting the word of God, claims to be friendly toward the Bible. But, with perverse persistence and persistent perversity, it claims what it calls errors and defects. The attitude of modernism, making maybes mighty in many minds, is the practical denial of any really supernatural and superhuman elements in the Bible.

Kings and rulers have tried to destroy it. Philosophers have tried to drown it in the muddy waters of their philosophy and ignorance. Science has tried to laugh it out of court. The dissecting knives of some theological anatomists have cut at its veins. Snipers, some from behind pulpit stands, some from behind college chairs, some from editorial desks, are throwing darts against the Book. But there the Book stands. It begins, “**In the beginning God,**” and ends “**Amen: come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen.**” It is the only book that tells man his origin and his destiny, whether heaven or hell.

—Deceased



JAMES:
Practical Christianity
(Part 3)
October 26th

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Don't Leave God Out Of Your Plans (4:13-17) ~ Jose Gamez
The Misuse Of Riches (5:1-6) ~ Eric Paluka
Patient Endurance (5:7-12) ~ David Brown
The Prayer Of Faith (5:13-18) ~ Jack Stephens
Saving A Soul From Death (5:19-20) ~ John West

Question & Answer Session