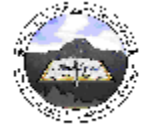




On The Frontier



“For The Glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

Vol IX No.9

November/December 2001

Leave It Alone, It Doesn't Belong To You

We humans have a penchant for interfering with things that don't concern us. "Put that down; that's not yours; don't touch that;" are all common childhood admonitions. This early inclination to tamper speaks loudly regarding human nature. A conscientious parent acknowledges the potential danger this behavior (when left unchecked) poses for children. But what about trespassing adults?

I Thessalonians 4:11

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

I Peter 4:14,15

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

This should really arrest our attention. Note the company a busybody keeps, i.e. murderer, thief, evildoer - (a nefarious grouping to say the least). Clearly then, God's people should tend to their own affairs and not "stick their noses" into other peoples business. If it isn't yours, leave it alone!

II Thessalonians 3:6-15

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that

man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Please note -- we never treat a fellow Christian as an enemy. However, it's foolish to continue to "pal" around with someone who abandons the Scripture in favor of sin. Should we be found doing so we would be guilty of having fellowship with the sin of another. This would be true even if we hadn't sinned after the similitude of their transgression.

The following outlines the appropriate course of action:

Galatians 6:1-10

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Bear ye one another's burdens [*baros* =a transferrable weight], and so fulfil the law of Christ.

For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

For every man shall bear his own burden [*phortion* =non-transferable weight or responsibility].

Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

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.

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

If we are to be involved in the affairs of others it should be for good. Should we observe a brother or sister in error our goal must be to help them set things right. There is no doubt, tattlers, talebearers and busybodies are outside the Will of the Lord.

Proverbs 20:19

He that goeth about *as* a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

Proverbs 24:21

My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change [role players, acting as someone other than who they are, i.e., hypocrites]:

Being a meddler in the affairs or actions of others can get us into a heap of trouble.

Proverbs 26:17

He that passeth by, *and* meddleth with strife *belonging* not to him, *is*

like one that taketh a dog by the ears.

Imagine, if you will, what it would be like to engage a Doberman Pinscher by the ears! For starters, Fido would NOT like this. Consequently, he would become enraged. Since you're holding him by the ears you're as close to the action as possible. You dare not let him go, for the moment you do he will inflict you with a vicious bite. He may not even stop there. He may go on to rip and rend and . . . well, you get the picture! So there you are, between the proverbial "rock and a hard place." Yup, one foot on a banana peel and the other in a grave. You dare not let the pooch go as the cost for doing so is more than you wish to pay. Yet, you cannot stay this way forever! The point is, once you meddle in strife there's no quick, painless way out. Oh no! It's a very hurtful and protracted experience, one you'll likely not soon forget. The solution? Don't meddle! Leave it alone, it doesn't belong to you.

Proverbs 20:3

It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.

Proverbs 18:6

A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes [a beating].

II Timothy 2:23,24

But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient,

It's good to help people, God loves that! But, He sure doesn't approve of strife and meddling. What He has given us we are to freely enjoy. But,

what doesn't belong to us we are to leave alone. So many dos and only a few don'ts.

Consider Adam and Eve. God gave them dominion over all the Earth with only ONE "hands off" stipulation.

Genesis 1:28

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Genesis 2:16,17

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

As we know all too well, they disobeyed God and partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The rest, as we say, is history. And man has been a meddlesome busybody ever since, sticking his nose in where it doesn't belong and suffering the consequence because of it. Why? Because being a snoop became an integral part of our "old man" sin nature.

There are many things that do not belong to us. But there are two that are overtly appealing to the five-senses. They are; vengeance and the past. Neither of which are ours. They both belong to God. If you will remember this and leave vengeance and the past to their rightful owner

you will enjoy a much more blissful life.

Vengeance belongs to God:

Romans 12:17-21

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

God can turn ANY lemon into lemonade for us IF we do things His way. No other way will do! Evil cannot triumph over good when God's Will is exercised. Never, ever take revenge. Vengeance belongs to God, not man!!!

God requires the past:

Ecclesiastes 3:15

That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

Philippians 3:13,14

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

That which is done, is done. The past is not ours, God requires it. Why live in the past? The only day which matters is today. The present is ours to do with as we see fit. It behooves us then, to set our sails TODAY to press towards God's high calling in Christ Jesus! Today is the day, tomorrow may never be ours.

THIS MOMENT

I may never see tomorrow; there is no written guarantee. And things that happened yesterday belong to history. I cannot predict the future, I cannot change the past. I have just the present moment, I must treat it as my last.

I must use this moment wisely, for it soon will pass away. And be lost forever as a part of yesterday. I must exercise compassion, help the fallen to their feet. Be a friend unto the friendless, make an empty life complete.

The unkind things I do today may never be undone. And friendships that I fail to win may nevermore be won. I may not have another chance on bended knees to pray. And thank God with a humble heart for giving me this day. Author Unknown

Today is the ONLY day you have! NOW is the ONLY time that belongs to you. Leave the rest alone!

In A New York Minute

New York is preceded by its reputation. Famous for being the "financial capital" of the world, pizza, bagels, Broadway, the Statue of Liberty and much more. Glamorized on the Silver Screen from Fifth Avenue to Hell's Kitchen. Who doesn't know where the "Gorilla Building" is? Both in our Nation and world wide New York is mimicked. I've had Coney Island hot dogs in Ohio and New York steak in Alaska. I've even had New York bagels in Florida.

Some of New York's fame is warranted and some of it is not. This is also true of its infamy. Much of that is exaggerated. But, some of the better known characteristics describe her to a tee. Being born and raised there, I can assure you that it is the epitome of hustle and bustle. Rush, rush, rush does not begin to describe the pace known to most New Yorkers. Things move at such high velocity that language had to be adapted. For instance, a brief pause in service at a McDonald's restaurant can elicit a verbal response such as, "Today, alright!" Or, "While I'm still young, okay!" Waiting for a hamburger you might hear, "What, are we waiting for the cow to die of old age?"

In any case, fast food is really FAST! I'm reminded of a diner I used to frequent (the type of eatery, called a diner, that I'm thinking of is peculiar to the east coast) where the waiter, who was also the short order cook, would put the coffee cup on the table

and fill it before I was actually seated. This he did while rehearsing the days specials and handing me a menu. It was called the Golden Egg and it was run (as most New York diners are) by a Greek family, each of whom spoke broken English. It was neat, you could be in and out of there in a "New York Minute."

Yes, New York runs on such high octane that anywhere things occur rapidly they are said to happen in a "New York Minute." Interestingly enough, this concept of wanting it yesterday has really caught on. But, I'm sad to say, it isn't the best possible way to live. You see, it doesn't leave much room for patience and makes it next to impossible to maintain a peaceful mind-set. But, that's where people are headed. I want it now. No! I want it last week. This attitude of impatience also builds for itself unthankfulness and lust. Where did we ever get the idea that we must immediately have everything that we see? Not from God, that's for sure! How about trying this on for size?

Hebrews 13:5

Let your conversation [manner of life] *be* without covetousness [not loving money]; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

If I believe this, that He will never leave nor forsake me, then I will not be concerned with the immediate acquisition of material goods. Life insists we be impatient, but trust in the Lord builds solidarity and peace.

Psalms 37:34-40

Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*.

I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.

Yet he passed away, and, lo, he *was* not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright: for the end of *that* man *is* peace.

But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

But the salvation of the righteous *is* of the LORD: *he is* their strength in the time of trouble.

And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

Philippians tells us HOW to exchange anxiety for peace.

Philippians 4:6,7

Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

These two verses contain the best possible treatment for anxiety and stress available to man. Imagine what would happen if the medical profession endorsed and prescribed them! This is wonderful but don't you still have an itch for the instantaneous? Would you like to scratch it? I present to you that which causes the "New York Minute" to pale. This event described in Corinthians will occur at a speed inexpressible by the aforementioned phrase.

I Corinthians 15:51-58

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

In a moment [*atomos* - that which is so small it cannot be cut in two, indivisible. Folks that's very small!], in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Talk about your "New York Minute!" Look what happens when our Lord returns! The dead will be made alive and the living made immortal while being caught up to the clouds (I Thessalonians 4:13-ff). This entire event will be take but an *atomos*, the smallest measurable amount of time. His Return will

occur in the twinkling of an eye. How many times do you think you've twinkled your eyes reading this paragraph?

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law.

But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

This is tailor-made for those of us who favor LIFE in the fast lane! I'm enthusiastic about this! How about you? Our gathering together unto him is REALLY worth the wait. Savor and anticipate this event in your heart now, because when it happens, it will be quick, really quick. Given all that, I can be (are you ready for this?) very

patient. In fact, without the Hope of Christ's Return alive in your heart, you will lack patience AND endurance.

James 5:6,7

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

In a "New York Minute?" NAHH! In an *atomos*! In the twinkling of an eye!!! Now you're talking my language.

Editor's note :

reprinted from "On The Frontier"

Vol. 5 No. 2 June 18, 1998 .

All this puts me in "A New York State of Mind!" How about you?

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

NOTES