

acceptable substitute for real Christianity. To God, spirituality is either sacrificial or it is artificial. It is either the real thing or it is non-existent (Matt. 15:8-9). Consider these thoughts about how to remain T-R-U-E to God.

Trust. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5). Oh, how all of us need to develop greater trust in God! When we let the Lord direct our paths there can be no doubt we are headed in the right direction (Prov. 3:6). Trusting in pleasure, position, fame, or fortune is to put our trust in idols that cannot satisfy our soul's deepest needs (Ezek. 14:1-5).

Renew. "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4:23). A continual intake of spiritual nutrients is needed to keep us growing in Christ (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:18). The word "renew" carries with it the idea of "making fresh." When God's Word begins to be stale to us, it is a sure sign of our drifting away from the Lord (Heb. 3:12). The precious truths of the Bible should always thrill our lives and re-energize our souls (Heb. 4:12).

Understand. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord" (Ps. 107:43). The better we come to know the greatness of our God, the more we will desire to please Him and thank Him for all His blessings (Rom. 2:4; 1 Thess. 5:18).

Endure. "Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3). Satan will hurl all the darts at Christians he can muster (Eph. 6:16). We must find the strength to ever remain true to the truest friend we could ever have --- Jesus.

Difficult: That which can be done immediately

Impossible: That which takes a little longer.

Heartland Herald

1899 Saint Joseph St.
Dubuque, Iowa 52003

My Unfailing Friend

By Thomas D. Risk

What a sweet and blessed feeling
When I wake up every day
Just to feel God's presence near me
Just to know He's there to stay.

Oh, I know I am not worthy
Of His tender love and care,
Still I have His precious promise
That He's with me everywhere.

There will always be the shadows
And we can't escape the night,
Still I know He watches over me,
I am always in His sight.

Though the storms may rage around me
Still the Lord will help me stand,
There's a sweet and precious calmness
In the hollow of His hand.

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Practicing 1st Century Christianity In the 21st Century

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Evangelist

Michael Demory

Ministers

All members of the church

Schedule of Services

Sunday—9:30am
Wednesday—7:00pm

Evangelistic Efforts

Dubuque Advertiser &
TV Program

"The Bible Says"

Public Access
Cable Channel 16
Mon. & Thurs. @ 8:30pm
Tues. @ 2:30pm
Fri. @ 9:00am

Steps to Salvation

1. Hear the Word (Rom. 10:17)
2. Believe (Heb. 11:1,6)
3. Repent (Lk. 13:3)
4. Confess (Matt. 10:32-33)
5. Baptism (1 Pet. 3:21)
6. Remain Faithful (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Pet. 3:14)

Hot Weather "Sins"

(Via Matters of Faith)

NO, I have not forgotten that "all unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 3:5). Yes, I also know that one may in any environment can violate the will of heaven (1 John 3:4 AND James 4:17). However, I also know that certain sins are far more frequent in hot weather than in cold weather. For some strange reason in the cold climates people do not routinely cavort outdoors in shorts, swimsuits, bikinis, thongs, strapless, backless or low-cut dresses. Hence, people are willingly blind if they think the Lord's church does not face a seasonal threat peculiar to hot weather.

For the most part the laws of culture, society and the state pertaining to public decency and modesty have been nullified. How much farther this looseness will go God only knows. How much farther members of the church will go is another question.

Modest dress is expected of men as well as women. Please consider the following lesson from Genesis 3. After Adam and Eve sinned they were fully aware of their nakedness and were ashamed. From their human perspective they concluded that their fig leaf aprons were modest. However, from God's viewpoint the fig leaf aprons did not constitute modest apparel. Hence, God made them coats of skin. Adam and Eve were not properly clothed until they put on the modest attire God had made them.

Of course, the world still considers the modern counterparts to "fig aprons" to be fashionable. My great grandfather had a saying that better describes the strings worn for clothing today than it did in his day. Of a skimpily clad person he declared, "She does

not have enough clothes on to wad a shotgun." Anyone that, has ever seen how little wadding it takes to load a muzzle loading firearm can understand why such a comment is up to date in describing bathing suits, bikinis, strings and "Speedos." If there is fear of God among the children of God they will cover themselves to the same degree that God covered Adam and Eve. (The Hebrew word means from the shoulders to the knee—not the top of the knee, but to the bottom of it!). It's amazing, just how close to the line of sin that "Christians" try to get. Women wear skirts and dresses to the top of the knee, or men and women their shorts to the same area, never thinking that while one is standing that may appear modest; but once seated, the garment is no longer at the top of the knee, but well on its way northward.

If it is acceptable to God for God's people to go around in public almost naked or in sensual clothing why not undress and/or sensuously dress in the same way for worship and Bible study? Of course, in some congregations it is acceptable to wear shorts and other immodest apparel. However, because brethren do it, does not make it acceptable to God. If there is any fear of God left among the brethren there will be a complete repudiation of tight pants, tank tops, strapless, backless and other "fig leaf" clothing. How many times have you observed men in public mowing their lawns in "fig leaf aprons"? There is a big difference in dressing to be attractive and dressing to attract attention and a lady and a gentleman knows the difference.

I am constantly amazed when parents will put their sons and daughters in dance, gymnastics, aerobic, swimming classes and such like activities in the typical scanty or tight

attire that typifies the accepted dress of such affairs. Foolish parents allow and even encourage their little precious girls to exhibit (for lack of a better way to refer to it) their femininity while they are innocent. But, they forget they are training them to wear "fig leaf aprons" rather than the modest clothing which God approves when they are "ripe for the picking". Some silly fathers never seem to realize that some young man somewhere in the future may look on "daddy's little darling" in the same way he looked on his father-in-law's precious little girl.

One cannot separate immodest dress from lust. All lust does not necessarily stem from immodest dress, but all immodest dress does provide the occasion for lust. Should they provide the occasion for their committing the sin of adultery with her in their hearts? With homosexuality running rampant in the land men need to think on how they present themselves before other men as well as liberated, lustful women (James 1:14-15).

I have no problem with swimming as such. I enjoy the water myself. If one is in deep water the ability to swim is a virtue. I certainly have no problem with bathing; as personal hygiene demands it. There are some people who need to be more frequent in this activity. What is wrong with mixed swimming is the clothing or lack of it that is worn or not worn at the public swimming pool, water parks, beaches and so forth. When we go on vacations "to get away from it all," do we think that we may "take a vacation from God?" If some are of such a shallow disposition of mind, then I am persuaded they probably think they are able to hide their conduct from God also (Jeremiah 16:17 and 23:24).

Do not allow the "place" of your vacation to rule out assembling with the saints. A little serious planning will help us go far toward helping us be with God's people when God expects us to be there. I find no New Testament authority to take some bread and grape juice to the creek bank to salve weak consciences that prick hearts just a little because they have absented themselves from the authorized corporate assemblies of Scriptural churches. Not every gathering of Christians on the first day of the week constitutes a Scriptural place of worship. If such were the case, there would not be any way one could forsake "the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is" (Hebrews 10:25).

Because of summer vacations some do in fact "rob God." They simply do not give of their means in the congregation where they are members. The financial demands continue for the church during hot weather. Leave you contribution or make it up when you return home, but do not "rob God" because you are on vacation.

Remember, the devil, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). If the exposure of fleshly bodies makes his appetite any more voracious he must be doing quadruple duty during the hot, dog days of summer. Brethren need to seriously ask themselves if their dress, or the lack of it, is representative of persons professing godliness.

The child of God has more important business and a higher calling than to serve the lusts of the flesh and to be conformed to the trends of the world. "And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof" (Galatians 5:24, II Corinthians 6:17-18 and I John 2:15-17). "Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:2-3).

Word Studies

"Blasphemy"

By Mike Demory

PERHAPS the most often referred to passage concerning the word "blasphemy," is that found in the Twelfth chapter of Matthews account of the one gospel; where the Pharisees are hounding Jesus with various accusations. Verses 1-14 Jesus is charged with breaking the law of the Sabbath; then in verses 15-21 withdrawing from the prying eyes of the Pharisees, Jesus heals many individuals. In verses 22-37 once again the religious leaders attack Jesus with charges that He is a servant of Satan, and in verses 38-45 He condemns that generation.

The focus of our study is Matthew 12:31-32 which says, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Putting into perspective what Jesus has told these Jews of the first century we find that since the beginning of His ministry, Jesus had established His teachings and Himself with miracles, signs, and wonders (John 2:11; 3:2). In Matthew 12:14-30 He healed multitudes, yet the religious leaders refused to accept them as proof He was God incarnate and accused Him instead of serving the devil (vs. 24). Through logical argumentation Jesus established that it was impossible for Him to serve both God and Satan.

Having witnessed the miracles Jesus performed, the Jews hardness of heart caused them to reject God's Messenger and Message (Christ and the gospel). Therefore, Jesus is equating this rejection to "Blasphemy," and most particularly, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The Greek word found in this text is βλασφημία (blasphemia), which denotes the idea of contemptuous speech that intentionally lacks reverence of God and all things holy. It refers to an attitude, a condition of the heart. These Jewish leaders had so convinced themselves that they were the only ones with the ability to recognize a true message from God—their minds were seared to accepting a different version.

Their contempt for anyone teaching other than what they wanted to believe, was as Jesus called it, "blasphemy." Jesus told the people that all sins could be forgiven, even the sin of believing He was God incarnate. After all, it was possible for a person not to be able to grasp the concept of God (Spirit) becoming flesh and blood. However, undermining the work of the Holy Spirit was a different matter. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is outward proof that ones attitude and heart is skewed. It is a position that one has long held within, but now openly reveals his/her thinking through malicious and

damnable words. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is final and complete rejection of all that God has tried to do to bring men and women to repentance. It means a refusal to accept God's message in order to maintain one's own view.

It was not that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit could not be forgiven, for God has said He can and will forgive ALL sin (1 John 1:9). The problem in this text, is that the Jews refusal to accept the truth, coupled with their refusal to repent, equaled their not receiving forgiveness. Jesus knew their hearts, and was able to reveal this truth to them. While this specifically applied to those Jews in the first century "in this world nor in that to come," is it still possible for individuals blaspheme the Holy Spirit today? Without a doubt!

Although the age of miraculous has ceased, the Holy Spirit continues to be a living voice to convict us of sin (Hebrews 2:1-4; 3:19-4:11; 6:4-8; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; John 15:1-5; etc.). Like men and women of the past, we still have the ability to choose right or wrong. We can still suppress our conscience to the point that we reject the truth as did the Pharisees and Sadducees. When the attitude of man is such that it refuses to accept God's true message, no matter how rational it is, that they willingly and rebelliously shut out God's will for all mankind, then blasphemy of the Holy Spirit has occurred. A sin that will not be forgiven because of the seared conscience and plugged ears of the individual whose mind is made up that there can be no other way.

When the Holy Spirit reveals through His Word that baptism is necessary for the forgiveness of sins and someone rejects that, they have blasphemed. When the Holy Spirit says there is one church which is blood bought, the defender of the truth, to which the save are added by God and someone says the church is unimportant—they have blasphemed. When people heap to themselves teachers that suit their own likings, they have blasphemed (2 Timothy 4:3-4). Paul said that Hymenaeus and Alexander were delivered to Satan because they made shipwreck of the faith which he equated to blasphemy (1 Timothy 1:19-20). It is also possible for Christians to blaspheme by mere actions (1 Timothy 6:1; Titus 2:5).

We must learn to reverently accept God's Word as it is written, to right divide it, and not to twist it to our own destruction as did the Jews. We can blaspheme God today if we are not careful. But thanks to Jesus Christ, we can be forgiven of such a sin if our hearts will submit to His will and repent.



Remaining True To God

By Mike Vestal

TO draw near to God we must have true hearts. They must be real and genuine, without superficiality or hypocrisy (1 Cor. 12:1-3). In a world that has everything from imitation leather to imitation ice cream, it is important to remember that there is no

Remember in Prayer

Special Prayers

- Myra O'Neill
- Marie Crow
- Our new evangelism effort
- Lilly Rucker & family
- Lyra Grochmal (7 yrs)—spine cancer— more tumors are growing
- Laurie Davis—Multiple Sclerosis
- Yolanda Ritchwood—M.S.
- Natalie Bauman—M.S.
- Wade Miller—diabetes
- Susan Noel— that she studies to understand God
- Russell Bender— that he studies to understand God
- Freeman Dudley—liver cancer
- Kaiser family
- Jones family
- Walker family
- Brother Odom (Abilene)—COPD
- Eric Boor—blood disease
- Rockfalls church of Christ
- TV Program
- State of our Nation
- The closing of Planned Parenthood
- The church
- The erring & the Lost

Evangelizing the World

- Garret Derouin—Webster, Wisc.
- Scott Nedland—Rice Lake, Wisc.
- Brian Sherrell—LaCrosse, Wisc.
- Bernie Guzman—Philippines
- Fred Rhodes—Newton, Iowa
- Johnny Robertson— Martinsville, Vir
- James Oldfield—Riedsville, NC
- Derrick Brown —Jamaica
- Gary Workman—Ukraine
- Kolakaluri Prasad—Nalgonda, Dist., India
- G. Prabhu Kumar—Chennai, India
- John O'Neal—India & Ghana
- Tom Wacaster—India & Russia
- Holger Neubauer—South Haven, Michigan
- Ernie Lawrence—Hutto, Texas

Military

- Chip O'Neal—Afghanistan
- Jonathan Duckstein—Afghanistan
- Michael Chlamon—Ft. Drum, NY
- Daniel Heflin—Afghanistan
- Jason Cunningham—Stateside
- Jon McCain—Tech Training
- Military families who are coping while loved ones in harms way