

StraitWay



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The Preacher's Attitude Toward "Preach the word..." (4)

In the book of Titus, Paul instructed a young man in the work of an evangelist. (1) Titus was to "...set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee..." (Tit. 1:5). This did not make him a "pastor." The modern idea of "pastoral oversight" is not in the word of God. (2) "...The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies...Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth" (Tit. 1:12,13). Rebuke is an obligation of the preacher who pleases God and is concerned about the eternal salvation of men (cf. II Tim. 4:1,2). (3) "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine..." (Tit. 2:1). Preaching is serious business. Only sound doctrine is to be taught. Anything else wastes man's time and takes him to torment. After Paul charged Titus to "...speak thou the things which become sound doctrine...", he told him what to teach (Tit. 2:1-10). (4) "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority" (Tit. 2:15). Preaching is to have the authority of Heaven ringing in it. Paul wrote, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..." (II Cor. 5:11). (5) "Let no man despise thee" (Tit. 2:15). That Titus was a young man did not change the truth. He was not to be haughty, but neither was he to be looked down on. Proper conduct of an evangelist's affairs helps his credibility (I Tim. 4:12). (6) "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men (Tit. 3:1,2). Remind the brethren of their obligations, teach them their duty. (7) "...these things I will that thou affirm constantly..." (Tit. 3:8). Some things must be preached and preached again. Like Peter, the evangelist must "...not be negligent to put you always in remembrance..." (II Pet. 1:12). (8) "But avoid foolish questions..." (Tit. 3:9). Sift out the wheat and throw the chaff away. It will take time and wisdom to do a good job of this. (9) "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject..." (Tit. 3:10). Factious men, including false teachers, must be dealt with or they will destroy a congregation.

The Holy Spirit-inspired apostle Paul instructed Timothy and Titus to do their God-given work in God's way. If one follows Paul's instructions he will be a "...good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine..." (I Tim. 4:6) and will "Preach the word..." being "...instant in season, out of season;..." reproofing, rebuking, and exhorting "...with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2).

May God richly bless you in your efforts to preach the everlasting gospel to eternity bound souls. Be diligent, study carefully as you "Watch thou in all things..." (II Tim. 4:5).

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Word Studies

Adultery

With divorce being so widely practiced and so easily obtained in our culture, it is no surprise that conflicts over it should arise when men try to justify themselves and others in their breaking of marriages to contract new ones. When one sees in the Scriptures strong words of disapproval of divorce and remarriage, yet he considers changing his practice (or persuading others to change theirs) to be too hard, he will often seek some way to mitigate what has been revealed by inspiration. Many times, the conflicts that arise over this subject center around semantics. We are told that some words do not mean what they appear to mean.

One such case is the teaching that the word "adultery" does not refer to sexual sin. The implication of this doctrine is that the statements of Christ in Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11; and Luke 16:18 would not require separation of those who have unjustly divorced or have been divorced by their mates and remarried. Under this teaching, it is not possible for a couple to "live in adultery," for their adultery is limited to the actions of divorcing and remarrying. It is said that Jesus thus defined "adultery" in Mark 10:11: "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her;" therefore the definitions of lexicographers should be rejected. The English word "adultery," it is averred, derives from the word "adulterate," which means "to pollute, add something foreign." (See Smith-Waters Debate, Gospel Truths Magazine, July & August, 1999)

Such an understanding of the term "adultery" will not hold up when considered in the light of its use in the Bible and other literature. Marriage is practiced among all human cultures, sexual infidelity in marriage is a universal problem, and all languages have words with which to specify it. Our English word "adultery" means, "voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife or between a married woman and someone other than her husband." It first appeared in English literature in the fourteenth century, and it meant then what it means now. It did not derive from the word "adulterate;" that word did not appear in the language until the sixteenth century. (Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dictionary, p. 58)

When God commanded from Mt. Sinai, "You shall not commit adultery," no definition of the word was necessary. The Israelites knew what it was. In Leviticus 20:10-21, the Lord catalogues several sexual practices which they were to shun. The first is this: "The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death." Since a man cannot divorce or marry another man's wife, it is apparent that the prohibition here was against "sexual intercourse with the wife of another man," as all lexical authorities agree that the Hebrew word "na-aph" means. Ezekiel 16:30-34 compares unfaithful Israel to a wife who commits adultery. The Lord said that if she received payment for it, it would be "harlotry." This leaves no room for doubt about what was meant by the word translated "adultery."

The Lord quoted the seventh commandment in Matthew 5:27, then added, "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." It would be extremely naive to assume that the man described here is looking upon a woman with a desire to marry her! No, the Greek word "moichaomai" means the same as the English "adultery" and the Hebrew "na-aph." The desire is for prohibited sexual relations.

Jesus's statements that remarriage after divorce without fornication constitutes adultery were not meant to define "adultery" as divorcing and remarrying. He rather extended application of the word to include sexual relations of a man and a woman in a second marriage. The Pharisees did not realize that even though a man breaks up his marriage, marital relations in a subsequent marriage violate the covenant which he made with his first wife. God does not release him from that covenant. He continues to violate it while he remains in the second marriage.

First Principles

A Candid Look at Baptism

Baptism is a major New Testament topic, and most all religious groups that make any claim of being "Christian" practice a rite they call baptism. However, much controversy surrounds the subject of baptism, and these controversies usually center around four points-(1) The action involved in the administration of baptism, (2) The design or purpose back of it, (3) The proper subject or candidate for baptism, and (4) The administrator of baptism.

In this article attention will be given to the first two of these. We hope to give these matters a very straightforward consideration, allowing the New Testament to speak. Let those who want to argue know that their argument will thus be with the Word of God.

THE ACTION OF BAPTISM: Some speak of "modes" of baptism, and the manual of a prominent denomination says, "Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, according to the choice of the applicant." (Manual, Church of the Nazarene, 1948, p. 31). But what does the New Testament say?

"Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

"Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who has raised Him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). Note that being raised with Christ follows one's burial with Him in baptism. If there is no burial, there is no resurrection with Him. If there is no resurrection, there is no newness of life.

When these plain passages are considered, statements in other passages become crystal clear as well. For example, of the Ethiopian's conversion scripture states, "And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. And when they had come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch say him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:38-39). Sprinkling or pouring would necessitate no going down into the water.

THE DESIGN OR PURPOSE OF BAPTISM: The word of God assigns several purposes to baptism. Baptism is a condition of entrance into the kingdom of God. To Nicodemus Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," and again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:3,5). If it were doubted that baptism is the water referred to, be reminded that baptism is the only ordinance in the New Testament associated with the church or kingdom that involves water. Of the Colossians who were "buried with Him in baptism", Paul says, "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13). By scriptural baptism, one's citizenship is changed from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God.

Baptism is for the remission of sins. To the folk on Pentecost who asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?," Peter responded, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). There are two commands in his answer, "repent" and "be baptized". The thoughtful student will observe that these two commands, being joined by the copulative conjunction "and", what one command is for, the other is for. With this in mind, note what Ananias said to Saul, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

Through baptism one gets into Christ. Paul said to the Galatians, "For you are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27). Salvation and all other spiritual blessings are in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10; Eph. 1:3), and the only means revealed for getting into Christ is by being baptized into Him. Reconciliation to God is accomplished in Christ (2 Cor. 5:19), in the one body (Eph. 2:16); but one is "baptized into (the) one body (I Cor. 12:13). Have you been baptized into Christ?

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Personal Work

A great problem in the church today is the inactivity of those who have knowledge, but fail to turn it into action. The church needs those who are constructively dissatisfied with things as they are and are striving to make them better. Such persons are self-motivated. Self-motivation is within the reach of each one of us.

There are three basic ways to motivate people and the Lord uses all three to motivate us.

FEAR MOTIVATION - that which causes a person to act because he is afraid of the consequences if he fails to act. Though the Lord used fear to motivate us, this was not His only method. A person, constantly threatened by fear, may soon become calloused and develop toleration for every fear he faces. Man sometimes has a way of putting far away the threat of punishment when this life is over. The punishment is not less certain, but when man can think of it as being a long way off, it loses some of its power to motivate. I believe this is why many do not obey the gospel. They think they still have plenty of time to do so.

INCENTIVE MOTIVATION- the opposite of fear motivation. Paul was motivated by fear but a stronger influence in his life was incentive motivation. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ," "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Phil. 3:8,11.

The key to incentive motivation is appetite. Consider the example of the horse moving forward to reach a carrot dangling from a stick strapped to his back. But if he has just been fed all he wanted to eat, he will have no desire to reach the carrots. Incentive motivation has certain limiting factors.

ATTITUDE MOTIVATION- Jesus made use of attitude motivation. "If ye love me, keep my commandment." "Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John 14:15,23. Love and obedience are related as cause is to effect. Obedience is the natural consequence of love. Obedience which comes from fear become wearisome; and obedience prompted by reward, may become mechanical and without feeling. Obedience arising from love is easy, natural and pleasant. When a person develops a certain pattern of thought, his thinking pattern becomes so automatic that there is no conscious intention of what he thinks about. And this habit becomes an attitude. Good thoughts and actions do not produce bad results; and bad thoughts and actions do not produce good results. We often fail to change the lives of people because we try to control their actions without changing their attitude. In order to properly do the will of Christ one must have "the mind of Christ" in him (Phil. 2:5). Anything short of this - having a conflict between mind and action - will result in a life of hypocrisy. Man does not just happen to have certain attitudes or thought habits; they are acquired.

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EVIDENCE

THEISTIC EVOLUTIONIST'S DILEMMA

Theistic evolutionists embrace the theory of evolution but insist that the theory does not conflict with the scriptures. Long ago, when I was in college a preacher for a sectarian group made the comment that evolution strengthened his belief in God. I considered that a strange statement coming from one who claimed to believe and defend the Bible as the word of God. The notion was that Bible believers need to get in step with modern scientific thought; that evolution is "logical." It is uncomfortable for some to accept that God spoke matter and energy into existence, instituted the climate and furnished the environment with all the things necessary to support man which was the last of his creation.

Paul addressed the problem of worldly and divine wisdom in 1 Corinthians 1:18 when he wrote: "**the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.**" The Greeks of verse 22 "**seek after wisdom.**" Consequently, "**not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.**" As some would reduce problems by separating gospel and doctrine (the idea being we can agree upon the gospel, but doctrine is subject to interpretation and secondary to the gospel) others mis-read Genesis 1 and 2 to accommodate the theory of evolution. It goes down hard but most evolutionists are not Bible believers.

To believe that man, who is imbued with an eternal spirit, evolved from lower forms presents a formidable problem. We oppose abortion because life within or without the womb is life. Modern thinking and law differentiates. The Bible does not. Consider passages such as Luke 1:44 concerning the babe John in the womb. Both Elizabeth and Mary knew they would have sons long before sonic technology. Genesis 25:21-23 makes it clear that Jacob and Esau were defined clearly in God's eyes as they were in the womb. An insurmountable problem for the theistic evolutionist, if the Bible is to be given credence, is: when did the eternal spirit enter man? Did it evolve along with the physical body? Bible believers know that the spirit is coincidental with the beginning of physical life in the womb, at the time of conception. Hebrews 12:9 tells us that the God of verse 7 is "**the Father of spirits.**" Genesis 2:7 is clear concerning Adam: "**And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.**" Then, not eons later.

What of these creatures which were superior animals but still animals? Did they have primitive spirits? If so did they have any responsibility for moral, ethical, and spiritual behavior? Logic would say, "No." They are animals. Animals are creatures of instinct. An animal's capacity to learn is very limited. But somewhere in the eons of time required by the evolutionists for the changes that produced different species, what is called modern man appeared. The atheist doesn't have the problem the theistic evolutionist has. The atheist believes that man is just an animal with the characteristics of animals albeit more intelligent than others. The spirit the Bible speaks of does not concern the atheist.

Such speculations cannot be made to agree with or conform to the Genesis record. More and more religious groups are having less and less difficulty with evolution. A quote from A THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE 39 ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, E.J. BICKNELL, DD, LONGMANS, GREEN & CO. LTD, 1963, page 178 may help in understanding why, "As we have seen, we no longer believe in the historical existence of Adam." Theistic evolutionists are in the vanguard of such thinking. Saints will exercise patience but are inflexible concerning the faith. If the creation is not a matter of the faith how long can the Creator be included?

Issues Among Brethren

DO WE HAVE TO SIN?

Some are contending that since God foreknew that man would sin and have need of a Savior, Eph.1:4, and because Rom.3:23 declares that, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," that man has to sin. In this article we will compare that idea with the teachings of the Bible.

It's true that God foreknew that man would sin, but that doesn't mean man has to sin. God knew beforehand that Jesus would die upon the cross, Isa.53:5, but Jesus didn't have to die, in the sense that He had no choice in the matter. The Bible tells us that Jesus "for the joy set before him endured the cross," Heb.12:2. Jesus chose to die for our sins because of what his death would accomplish. In the same sense man sins, by choice. The Bible says, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," Js.1:14-15.

Consider the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, recorded in Acts 5. They plotted together and lied about how much money they gave. Did they have to commit that sin? Evidently not, because Peter said to Ananias, "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men but unto God," Acts 5:4. In other words, Peter told Ananias, "Ananias, you didn't have to act as you did. You didn't have to sell the possession. Neither did you have to give any of the money after you sold it. You had a choice and when you chose to lie about your giving,, you sinned against God." Just as Ananias made the choice to sin, so do we. We don't have to sin but we choose to do so.

But, someone might argue, "It's the first sin that you have to commit. After that you have a choice." What about Adam and Eve? They were the first man and woman to disobey God. Did they have to? Did they have no choice? Who would teach that they did? Every Bible student knows that they sinned in the Garden of Eden because they made that choice!

If we have to sin, certain Bible verses make no sense at all. If we can't keep from sinning, why are we encouraged, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you," Js.4:7? If we have to sin, why did Jesus say to the woman taken in adultery, "Go and sin no more," Jn.8:11? These verses, and many others, prove that man does not have to sin.

If we have to sin, think of what a grim, dark picture that paints of God-how cruel and unjust that makes Him to be! Speaking of God the Psalmist wrote, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face," Ps.89:14. But, God cannot be a just God if He gives us a law which we have to break and then punishes us because we break the law. Suppose the state law imposed a speed limit which you couldn't keep and , then, fined you for violating the law. Would that be an act of justice? Certainly not.! Neither can God treat us justly if He gives us a law which we cannot keep and punishes us for breaking that law!

If we have no choice in the matter and have to sin, why is it that we don't sin every time we are tempted? The answer is, "We don't have to sin. We have a choice." Joshua placed a choice before the people of Israel when he said to them, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve," Josh.24:15. Their choice was between serving the true God of Heaven or the idols and false gods of the nations around them

One reason Jesus had for coming into the world was to prove that man can live with out sinning-that God is just in punishing sin . The Bible has this to say about our Lord, "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," Heb.4:15. Peter tells us that Jesus "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," 1 Pet.2:22. Thus, inspired writers want us to know that even though the devil tempted our Lord in every way, He never faltered and disobeyed His heavenly Father. Remaining pure and sinless qualified Jesus to be offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Continued on Back Page

God Is No Respector of Persons

“For there is no respect of persons with God” (Rom. 2:11). “Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34,35). Consider some matters in which God is no respecter of persons.

ALL MEN ARE UNDER THE SAME LAW. “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:25). The perfect law of liberty is the Gospel of Christ which is to be preached to all the world (Mk. 16:15) and to which all the world is amenable. That means those who are out of Christ became sinners by violating that law (I John 3:4). Does that mean that aliens sinners are amenable God’s marriage law? Yes! Then it is possible for an alien sinner to be guilty of adultery (I Cor. 6:9-11) as well as many other sins (Gal. 5:19ff).

ALL MEN SIN, ALL MEN NEED FORGIVENESS. Jesus, the Divine Son of God, is the only responsible being who ever lived on earth without sin (I Pet. 2:22). No mere man has ever lived without sinning, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). “...if one died for all, then were all dead...” (II Cor. 5:14). “And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins...” (Eph. 2:1). All men need God’s forgiveness.

SALVATION PROVIDED FOR ALL MEN. “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb. 2:9). “Who gave himself a ransom for all...” (I Tim. 2:6). “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10).

FORGIVENESS IS OFFERED TO ALL MEN ON THE SAME CONDITIONS. Jesus said, “...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the father, but by me” (John 14:6). He also said, “...if ye **believe** not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to **repent**...” (Act 17:30). It is **repent** or perish (Lk. 13:3) for **repentance** is “...unto life” (Acts 11:18). “For with the heart man **believeth** unto righteousness; and with the mouth **confession** is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). “And he answered and said, I **believe** that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37). “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be **baptized**, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). “...Peter said unto them, **Repent**, and be **baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:38). “...the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto *even baptism* doth also now save us...” (I Pet. 3:20,21). It is at the point of **baptism**, not faith, that God remembers “...their iniquities...no more” (Heb. 8:12) for **baptism** puts one into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3) where salvation is (II Tim. 2:10).

A COMMON CHURCH IS PROVIDED FOR ALL. Jesus said, “...upon this rock I will build my church...” (Mt. 16:18). He did not say churches, He said, “...church...” “But now *are they* many members, yet but one body” (I Cor. 12:20) and the body is the church (Eph. 1:22,23). If there is one body, there is one church. The idea that one church is as good as another and one can choose the church of “his choice” is not in the Bible.

ALL WILL BE JUDGED BY DIVINE STANDARD. “And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment...” (Heb. 9:27). “...we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Rom. 14:10). “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). “...the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev. 20:12).

THE SAME INVITATION IS OFFERED TO ALL: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt. 11:28). Study carefully.

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Continued from Issues Among Brethren

Because Jesus proved that man does not have to sin, God does not act unjustly when He threatens to punish those who commit sin. Every man sins of his own free will. He sins, not because he has to, but because he wants to. Satan entices him through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life and he yields to the temptation. Man is wholly to blame for his sin. We cannot attempt to blame God for our shortcomings as did Adam in the Garden of Eden, Gen.3:12.

Not a one of us has to sin but we all do. Each lost sinner should praise God because we can be “justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Rom.3:24-26.

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How Well Do You Listen?

“For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you...I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it” (I Cor. 1:11; 11:18). Paul listened.

When sincere people need you, do you listen? It matters not whether it is a personal problem, a question of doctrine, or sin in one’s life. If someone wants your attention, are you willing to listen?

How many times has one left a conversation with you feeling that you did not listen? What can you do to convince one that you have listened? (1) Give him your full attention. If you are preoccupied, you cannot listen well. (2) Make eye contact with him. (3) Try to understand his concern. Is it serious, trivial, does it involve sin, family, the church, myself, or himself? (4) Express your concept of his concern in your own words. (5) Be careful in expressing your evaluation of that which concerns him. (6) Use the word of God in helping him understand why you think as you do. (7) Pray before you part.

Convince people that you listen. But, listening should never take the place of standing for the truth. Listen to God first. Study carefully. --Editor

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