

# Where Are The Men?

Joe Slater

Truth is truth, no matter who says it. However, people's willingness to give truth a fair hearing may depend on their estimation of the person speaking it. Someone said, "I can't hear what you are saying because the way you are behaving is shouting so loudly!" We ought to be extremely careful to guard our reputation. "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches" (Proverbs 22:1).

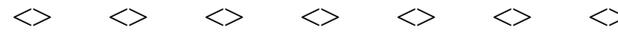
Even such a great man as Abraham could lose his influence with people. God wanted him to a blessing to the nations (Genesis 12:2). But when famine drove him to Egypt, Abraham deceived his hosts into thinking Sarai was merely his sister, not his wife. As a result, Pharaoh took Sarai into his harem, intending to make her one of his wives.

When God plagued Pharaoh's house, the king realized his error and confronted Abraham with these words: "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife" (Genesis 12:18, 19). Sadly, instead of being a blessing, Abraham had brought trouble to the Egyptians. In doing so, he had ruined his influence. How much attention do you suppose Pharaoh would have paid to Abraham had he attempted to teach the king about the one true God?

One of the harsh realities of life is that building a good reputation takes a long time, but you can destroy it in a single moment. God may forgive you, but that doesn't mean your neighbors will (especially those who don't know the Lord). One foolish act or word may destroy your influence with another person for decades – perhaps even for a lifetime!

Abraham assumed that the Egyptians had such low morals that they would kill him to take away his beautiful Sarai. While they were pagans, they evidently respected marriage and were offended by deceit. They expected better behavior than they saw from Abraham. Likewise our society, though nominally "Christian," is, in practical terms, pagan. Still, most folks have some idea of right and wrong, and they expect true Christians to behave uprightly. If we fail to do so, we ruin our reputation and thereby sacrifice our influence.

Brethren, let us strive to show the proper example to our neighbors, that we may gain the moral authority to teach them the good news of Jesus Christ!



## TO BE A CHRISTIAN:

If a man would be a soldier,  
He'd expect, of course to fight.  
And he couldn't be an author  
If he didn't plan to write.  
So is it common logic?  
Does it have the right true ring,  
That a man, to be a Christian,  
Doesn't have to do a thing?  
If a man would be a hunter  
He must go among the trees.  
And he couldn't be a sailor  
If he wouldn't sail the seas.  
So, how strange for any member  
Of the church to think that he  
Can forsake the work and worship  
And a worthy Christian be!

# Everyone Needs an Edith

*"My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, 'You sit here in a good place,' and you say to the poor man, 'You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,' have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives"?* (James 2:1-4, NASB)

She contacted our church office and requested a ride to worship services. Long story short, she was new in town, dropped off by relatives and left to fend for herself. She lived in a trailer with her dog. (The trailer was barely big enough for her!) She was not so clean. She had body odor. But we provided transportation for her to EVERY service and church function. We also provided her with personal necessities i.e. soap, lotion etc. Honestly, I have since wondered if providing those personal necessities was for her benefit, or ours, if you know what I mean! I mean, seriously, there were lingering odors on car seats, pew pads etc.

In the meantime we contacted a former congregation which she had provided as a past reference. Having filled the preacher in, I enquired, "Do you know a lady by the name of Edith?"

His response is one that I shall never forget, as well as a lesson that I shall never forget. He said, "Every congregation needs an Edith." He then proceeded to tell me that Edith was responsible for at least, two people obeying the gospel. How? Edith was the person, such as James speaks of, who did not have a gold ring or fine clothes. She had a problem with hygiene. In spite of this, the church accepted her. This Christian spirit was recognized by visitors who subsequently obeyed the gospel. Had they not seen such a display of Christianity toward Edith, likely they would not have returned for a second visit nor rendered obedience to the gospel.

Yes, we all need an encounter with "an Edith." The question is, how will we react? I suggest that such an encounter is an open door, an opportunity to put our professed faith into action.

--Roy Crutcher (Mt. Carmel, IL)