

Bo Peep and Assisted Suicide

Joe Slater

What should we do when brothers or sisters in Christ go astray? You might say, "That's obvious! Find them and bring them back!" Yes, it really is obvious. But it is seldom done in any serious manner.

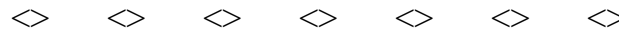
Galatians 6:1 says, "*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness . . .*" Frankly, though, we usually exchange this divine counsel for nursery rhyme wisdom. When Little Bo Peep lost her sheep, what was she advised to do? "Leave them alone, and they'll come home . . ."

It's easier just to leave them alone. Confronting a two-legged sheep who has wandered from God's fold can be unpleasant. In Jesus' parable of the lost sheep, He spoke of the shepherd going into the mountains (Matthew 18:12) or the wilderness (Luke 15:4) to find it. Personal comfort would suggest staying home and being content with the ninety-nine sheep still safe in the fold, rather than facing the dangers of the mountains and wilderness. The loving shepherd, however, sacrifices personal interests for the sake of the sheep.

Straying sheep, left to their own devices, are not likely to come home. A tiny minority might happen to wander back in the right direction, but the vast majority will perish. James exhorted: "*Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins*" (James 5:19, 20). "Leaving them alone" will not save their souls from death. If going astray from God is spiritual suicide (and it is), then the Bo Peep "leave them alone" philosophy amounts to assisted suicide. The late Dr. Jack Kevorkian was bad enough in the medical

realm; we certainly don't need to adapt his practice in our dealings with souls!

Thank God, Jesus didn't follow nursery rhyme wisdom! "*All we, like sheep, have gone astray*" (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus didn't "leave us alone" on the off chance that we might randomly wander back home. Rather, as a loving Shepherd, He laid down His life to bring us back to God. Jesus wants us to love one another "*as I have loved you*" (John 13:34). Let us love each other enough to make the effort to restore those who have strayed away.



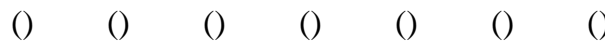
You Are Being Watched!

In one of his books, the late brother C.R. Nichol told the story of playing golf with a stranger. When brother Nichol's ball stopped behind a tree, the man suggested that he move it over twelve inches so he could drive it toward the green. Brother Nichol told the stranger that the rules did not allow that. Then he used an extra stroke to get himself out.

When the game was over, the man asked his business; upon being told brother Nichol was a preacher, the man came to hear him. He later obeyed the gospel.

You don't have to be a preacher to be watched. Somebody – an employee, employer, friend, neighbor – is watching you. As a result of your life, he will think either more or less of Christianity. WHICH?

--E. Winston Burton



Husband: Why does a woman say she's been shopping when she hasn't bought a thing?

Wife: For the same reason a man says he's been fishing!

"I AM OFFENDED!"

"If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men" (Romans 12:18).

It saddens me that we live in a society where almost everyone, it seems, is offended by almost everything. I don't know the cause. Is it because people have put themselves in a box and concluded that everything outside that box is an offense? Is it because people have become intolerant of everyone who disagrees with them? I don't know. I suppose there are many answers but here are some things that I have concluded in recent research.

First, if I claim to be offended, my claim is based on how I chose to respond. Could not my choice have been not to be offended? Was I guided to my response by pride or by humility?

Secondly, did someone claim that I offended them? The definition of "offend" ranges from "a slight annoyance" to "hurt or cause pain" to "ensnaring one in sin." Personally, I do not become greatly concerned if I am accused of offending someone since most would fall under the category of "a slight annoyance". Even Jesus was accused of being offensive (Matthew 15:12). However, if I have offended, in that I cause someone to stumble (I Corinthians 10:32; II Corinthians 6:3), then I need to be concerned and correct my wrong.

Thirdly (taken from another article), *Float Down the Stream*. "When I drive and other drivers do rude things, I often get angry. Then I remember a trick: I imagine myself floating down a stream in a raft, and the other cars are just twigs and leaves floating past me one way or another on this stream. They don't have to treat me a certain way, because they're just twigs. And so I serenely float down this stream, not worrying about how the twigs float around me (though I try not to hit them, because, you know, safety first). And in truth, this is how life is - other people aren't trying to offend you, don't even worry about you most of the time. They are just twigs floating by. Be nice to the twigs though."

--Roy Crutcher (Mt. Carmel, IL)