

The Right Way

Joe Slater

Start up the off-ramp to get into the freeway, and you will be confronted with glaring red signs: **WRONG WAY**. The highway department put those signs there for our protection. I have never heard anyone complain that such signs show the state is being narrow-minded or intolerant!

Samuel pledged to pray ceaselessly for his people and to teach them the **right way**; to do less would be sin (1 Samuel 12:23). Isaiah prophesied that the restored remnant of God's people would once again hear faithful teachers saying, "*This is the way, walk in it*" (30:21). Peter wrote of false teachers who devastated the church as those who "*have forsaken the right way*" (2 Peter 2:15).

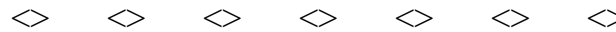
Most people today consider it arrogant to affirm that there is a "right way," especially in religion or morals. They resent being told that anything is right or wrong, particularly if the basis of that determination is the Bible. Modern notions of toleration and acceptance demand that every person decide individually what is right or wrong; and every person's decision is to be afforded equal validity. Virtually everything is considered a matter of opinion and individual judgment. The only absolute is that there are no absolutes! Tragically, this Humanistic philosophy has made serious inroads into the church.

We are far from the first people ever to have embraced these erroneous perceptions. Not long after Israel inherited the Promised Land of Canaan, the people forgot God and went their own ways. "*Every man did what was right in his own eyes*" (Judges 21:25). It was one of the darkest periods of that nation's history.

Solomon correctly observed: "*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes*" (Proverbs 12:15a). Two chapters later he warned: "*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*" (14:12).

God Himself put it this way: "*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts*" (Isaiah 55:8, 9). God's way is right, any and all human opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. May we say along with the psalmist of old, "*Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way*" (Psalm 119:128).

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me
--Jesus Christ (John 14:6)



Children Are Quick

Teacher: Why are you late?

Student: Class started before I got here.

Teacher: Why do you get so dirty?

Student: I'm a lot closer to the ground than you are.

Teacher: Your paper on "My Dog" is word-for-word the same as your brother's. Did you copy his paper?

Student: No, it's the same dog.

Teacher: What do you call a person who keeps talking when people are no longer interested?

Student: A teacher.

Teacher: George Washington chopped down his father's cherry tree, but he also admitted it. Why didn't his father punish him?

Student: George still had the axe in his hand.

--via House-to-House/Heart-to-Heart

Amazing Magic

"For some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria" (Acts 8:9).

It is not unusual to be asked, "Did you read the good news in your horoscope today?" Or, to hear, "When you take that test, I want you to know I am wishing you all the luck in the world." Both are superstitions, devoid of a knowledge of God's providence, all depending instead on "magic," sorcery, a rabbit's foot, or a crystal ball for advice and assurance for the future.

Famous people, including presidents and their wives, are not immune. They imagine that such methods unleash special powers not available to those who simply rely on God. How do impersonal powers work, and what is the difference in such beliefs and the faith of the Christian? If we depend on God's power, the power that believers tap for strength in meeting life's hazards, then just what is missing in our lives?

Acts 8 tells of Simon, the Sorcerer, who was said to have "*divine power*" and was seen as "*a great power*" in amazing the people "*for a long time with his magic*" (Acts 8:11). Philip came to town, people heard the good news of Jesus and believed, so seeing the crowds, Simon followed Philip to pick up clues about his gifts. Peter and John showed up, both carrying similar powers, and what did Simon do?

"Mr. Magic" may have thought, "I can take my proven ways, fit them in with the new, and I'll have it made." Certainly, that has often been attempted and is everywhere in "profit preaching," thought great for this modern era; but no blending of God and the occult or other emotional notions are trustworthy.

--Gordon V. Herrmann (deceased); Santa Maria, CA