

Walking By Faith

Joe Slater

Noah built the ark “by faith” (Hebrews 11:7). Moses tells us: “Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did” (Genesis 6:22). “And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him” (7:5). To act by faith, then, is to do as God instructs. This makes sense, because “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

To walk by faith today, we must submit ourselves to God’s will as revealed in the New Testament. The command to build an ark applied to Noah, but obviously is not intended for us. Likewise, Noah was not expected to observe the Lord’s Supper, though we certainly are. The basic principle of walking by faith, however, is timeless.

God told Noah to “make yourself an ark of gopherwood” (Genesis 6:14). That has nothing to do with the rodents that ruin your lawn. “Gopher” is a Hebrew word for a certain tree, probably in the cypress family. Noah could not build an ark of cedar while walking by faith. He might have thought that cedar was just as good; he might have liked cedar’s smell; but God said gopherwood.

Note that God did not specify many things about building the ark. What should Noah use to chop down the trees? How should he fasten the planks together? These and other matters were left to Noah’s judgment. God’s specific instructions, however, were to be followed without alteration of any kind.

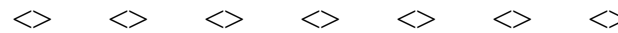
God has instructed us in the New Testament to be baptized (immersed, Acts 2:38). If we walk by faith, we cannot substitute sprinkling or pouring. But should we be immersed in a river or an ocean, a lake or a bath tub?

God’s word does not specify; thus, we may use whatever fulfills the command.

His word tells us to sing and make melody with our hearts (Ephesians 5:19). If we walk by faith, we cannot substitute making melody with musical instruments. Should we sing in unison or in harmony, by memory or utilizing song books? God’s word does not specify; all of these fulfill the command to sing.

These principles are not really difficult; we use them every day. Suppose you tell your son to go to the grocery store and buy a dozen eggs. He might walk to the store, or he might ride his bicycle. He might go to Kroger or to Albertson’s. But he must go to the grocery store, not the hardware store; and he must buy a dozen eggs, not a dozen candy bars!

May God help us all to walk by faith!



It’s A New World

“A group of young people put a gun to the head of a 64-year-old man reading a book at the Wyman Park Dell, sprayed him with mace, and stabbed him, before stealing his belongings – an attack that they recorded on video and posted on Facebook” (source: BostonGlobe.com). This is what happens when you give the ability to publish without restraint into the hands of idiots. There is a constant one-upmanship in a race to “entertain” the wicked with wickedness. Let us all, young or old, be advised: It is sinful to be entertained by, or to “delight in the perverseness of evil” (Proverbs 2:14)

--Jared Jackson, via Fortify Your Faith

WHERE IS YOUR HATE FOCUSED?

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy’” (Matthew 5:43).

Is your hate focused on the president-elect, homosexuals, soldiers, police, racially different people, other religions, someone who did you wrong, or whoever? Many who wear the name Christian demonstrate by their speech and actions that they hate the sinner rather than the sin.

Jesus in Matthew 5:34 says plainly that we are to love everyone. One argument He makes is that God does not discriminate when it comes to His love. We all can quote John 3:16 which says that God loves every single person and sent His only begotten Son to die for every single person.

Human beings were created in God's image. In James 3:9 we are reminded that we cannot bless God and curse men who are made in God's likeness.

Jude tells us that we must hate the sin which pollutes the garment (Jude 23). While we hate the sin, we are to have mercy on sinners and snatch them out of the fire. Never forget that once we were sinners, ungodly, and enemies of God. In spite of this, God so loved that He sacrificed His Son so that we can be saved (Romans 5:6-11).

Jesus tells us that our love to our fellowmen must be perfect like our Father's love (Matthew 5:48). There simply is no room in a Christian's heart for hatred of others. God will show us mercy as we show mercy. We are to love others to the point of doing everything we can, first to reconcile them to God through Jesus and second to help them stay on a godly path.

The focus of our hate must be sin, not the sinner.

--Ed Wittlif (Denver, CO)