Self-Deception: Conceit

Joe Slater

 ***“For anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, if he deceives himself”*** (Galatians 6:3).

 “I can do it myself!” Sometimes that’s a good state-ment, but we frequently carry it to unhealthy extremes. In context, Paul had just instructed the Galatians to gently, carefully restore people overtaken in sin, bearing one another’s burdens. Two issues might hinder that from happening.

 First, the erring member of the body might react negatively to efforts toward restoration. “I’ll handle it myself; I don’t need your help!” That statement betrays a certain prideful arrogance. Who among us is so strong as never to need help?

 We expect such an attitude from non-believers. None other than Karl Marx famously wrote that “religion is the opium of the people” (frequently misquoted as “opiate of the masses”). He called for the abolition of religion so people could attain true happiness by their own means rather than dulling their pain with religion. However, the atheistic communism enacted by Marx’s disciples (Lenin/Stalin/Mao et. al) brought only misery and death to multiplied millions. Let believers sit up and take notice!

 But there is also danger when brethren who imagine they “have all their ducks in a row” look down their noses at those overtaken in sin. Rather than bearing one another’s burdens and taking heed lest they themselves be tempted, they click their tongues and shake their heads – “Oh, how could you!”

 Remember this: *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall”* (Proverbs 16:18). Don’t be self-deceived!

Some Good News

  I am tired of all the negative messages in the news these days. What the world needs now is good news. The good news needed is the news that has endured for generations. This good news will get us through any war or conflict. The good news of the gospel is needed for all men in all nations.

 The gospel is never outdated. It never needs to be made culturally relevant. The gospel should never be comprised. God wants all men to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). Paul indicates the gospel has power. In Rom. 1:16, the writer from Tarsus states that the gospel is *“the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”* The gospel can save. It is therefore good news for all men. Here are some good news headlines that would be great for men to hear:

 YOU CAN BE SAVED.

 YOUR LIFE CAN BE CHANGED.

 YOU CAN START OVER.

 GOD CAN AND WILL FORGET YOUR

 PAST.

 THE NEW MAN BEGINS NOW.

 Good news is available today. It’s the same good news preached by the apostles. If that news is heeded and obeyed, man can have the same benefits as those in the early church. What the world needs is good news. What the world needs is the gospel!

--Bill Brandstatter (Marion, IL) via *Bulletin Gold*

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*"Learn to know and appreciate the importance* *of others who touch your life. It will help you touch other lives in meaningful ways."*

Lord Of All

 Maybe you have heard about the man who told the preacher he had “gotten religion.” The preacher replied, “That’s fine, but are you going to put aside all sin?” “Yes sir,” the man assured him, “I’m through with sin!” Next the preacher asked, “And are you going to pay up all your debts?” “Now wait a minute,” the man protested, “You ain’t talking religion, you’re talking business!”

 It’s unfortunate that we so often, like this man, suppose that we can be Christians in only part of our lives. Many seem to think we can have Christ in our “spiritual” lives while reserving the right to please ourselves in “secular” things. Scripture makes no such distinction.

 A Christian is to follow Christ every day. Jesus said, *“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me”* (Luke 9:23). No days are left out in this matter of following Christ.

 A Christian is to honor Christ in everything. *“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him”* Colossians 3:17). No conversations or actions are exempt from the claim of Christ.

 If Christ is Lord, there can be no corners of life where His lordship is not recognized. One’s loyalty to Christ will make a difference at home, work, business, play, and talk. A Christian must mean it when singing “All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give. I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live.”

--Bill McFarland (via *Old* *Paths*) adapted