

Gotcha!

Ponder: Catching someone in the act

Scripture: “(Love) does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth” (1 Corinthians 13:6, NKJV).

With the mid-term election only days away, candidates are being particularly careful to avoid gaffes. Many reporters delight in asking them “gotcha” questions – ones that are designed to trick the candidate into saying something seemingly scandalous. A single careless comment is enough to prove that candidate “X” is a no-good rascal!

I doubt that most Christians deliberately try to trip each other up. Some appear to take delight, however, when another says or does something sinful. Even if that person has behaved as a faithful Christian for decades, scandal-mongers focus the spotlight on the bad deed. “Gotcha!”

Legitimate correction of error is one thing. Ignoring the good to spotlight the bad is something else entirely. Jesus took a balanced approach. He certainly rebuked the errors and sins of the seven churches of Asia (Revelation chapters 2 and 3). But He also commended them for positive characteristics. In fact, two congregations (Smyrna and Philadelphia) received nothing but praise.

Even when a brother or sister sins, pointing a finger with a “gotcha!” attitude fails to manifest the spirit of Christ. Rather, we are to seek to restore that fellow-believer in a spirit of meekness, looking to ourselves lest we also be tempted (Galatians 6:1).

What if we focused our energy on finding ways to compliment and encourage each other? What if we tried to “catch” people doing a good job? Imagine how encouraged elders would be if, instead of an endless barrage of criticism, they received a pat on the back now and then. “I really appreciate how you brethren handled that situation; we don’t thank you often enough for your good work!”

Correction of error is legitimate. So is commendation when someone does well. Let’s have the right attitude and the right balance!