

That's So . . .

Ponder: Is the past good or bad?

Scripture: "For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but to tell or to hear some new thing" (Acts 17:21, NKJV).

I've never heard Hillary Duff's song, "That's So Yesterday." The lyrics indicate she is thinking we need to cut ties and move on in personal relationships. If that means flitting from one marriage (or live-in arrangement) to another, God obviously disagrees and so should His people!

More often, though, I hear the expression "that's so yesterday" referring scornfully to various social norms and practices of the past, not limited to personal relationships. Should we, like the Athenians, endlessly seek "some new thing"? Or should we stubbornly cling to the past? Neither extreme helps the cause of Christ.

"The past" usually refers to the relatively recent past. I cringe when I remember men wearing plaid polyester bell-bottom slacks in the seventies. I don't want to go back to six-inch-wide ties either! But before I sneeringly say, "that's so seventies," I need to remember that it was far easier then than now to find people willing to study the Bible with me. The cultural shift over the past half century hasn't been entirely good.

What if we shifted gears to the distant past? Try this: "That's so first-century!" We know the Lord's church began and the New Testament was written in the first century AD. To be the pre-denominational church that the New Testament reveals, we must abide by the standards written there. Some have mocked that idea, erroneously claiming that it would do away with driving cars, electric lights, and air conditioning. Even people who see past such subterfuge may think the first-century New Testament standards for salvation, worship, morality, and family cannot be applied to a culture halfway around the globe two millennia later.

In fact, however, they can and must be so applied. Our timeless God knows what is best for every culture in every age. Let's say with admiration, "That's so first-century!"

Hymn: "Ancient Words"

Prayer: Eternal Father, we thank You for revealing Your will and pray You will help us to humble ourselves in obedience to it. In Jesus' name, Amen.