

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” -Psalm 119:105

February 20, 2005



“Why Didn’t You Talk to Me?”

Bill Hall

“Why didn’t you talk to me?” ask hurt parents as they face their son for the first time after he had run away from home, leaving them panic stricken for five long days.

“Why didn’t you tell me you felt this way?” asks the grieving husband as he begs his “fed-up” wife to return home and give it another try.

“You could have called to verify the report before going into print,” scolded the “innocent” elders who have just been exposed for leading a congregation into yet another unauthorized activity.

“Doesn’t the Bible say to go to the offending party alone?” asks the person whose ugly attitude and presumptuous moves have just precipitated a major crisis in the church.

“Why didn’t you talk to me?” everyone is asking. How cowardly it makes the other person look! How unconcerned! And, in some cases, how disobedient to the Lord’s simple command! But the truth is, in each of

these cases, the person didn't "talk" because he knew that any approach he might have taken would have set off a major explosion. There are some people you just can't talk to. They get mad. They fly off the handle. They threaten you. They misrepresent you. They will do anything they can to destroy you. Step into a cage all alone with a roaring "lion" or vicious "tiger"? Yes, the Lord expects us to do so occasionally, but we can be pretty understanding if a man turns a bit "cowardly" when confronted with such a possibility.

No, we are not saying that all are unapproachable. We have talked to both types, with the approachable and the unapproachable. We know literally hundreds of Christians who we would be willing to approach about any question. But we also know of some who are terrors. We would just about as soon come face to face with a bear in the woods as to have to talk with them.

Genuine Christians are "*easy to be entreated*" (**James 3:17**). They receive others with humility, meekness, and understanding. They know how to approach others when a problem exists, and they know how to receive others. While "*contending earnestly for the faith,*" they refuse to be of a contentious spirit. They "*suffer long*" and are "*kind;*" they are "*not easily provoked;*" for they love others (**1 Cor 13:4-8**). They exercise self-control. Recognizing the possibility of error in their lives, they appreciate efforts on the part of others to correct them, even when they are convinced that the correcting ones are in error themselves.

Two needs exist: self-evaluation and repentance. Each must ask himself, "Am I among the approachable ones - as a husband, as a wife, as a parent, as a preacher, as an elder, as a fellow Christian - or am I one of the terrors who tends to explode whenever anyone crosses me?" Improvement is possible. The welfare of a Bible class is at stake; or the welfare of the church as a whole; or, of greater consequence, eternal happiness.

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“We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks, for Your name is near.”— **Psalm 75:1**

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“Do We Have the Authority?”

Rick Duggin

In some of my biblical discussions I hear this remark: “We do a lot of things that we have no authority to do.” My response: “If something is unauthorized, we must leave it alone! If not, we place ourselves in the same category as those who reject the Bible altogether. It’s just a matter of degree.”

There is a thread that runs throughout the Bible, warning us to take God’s word seriously.

“You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you”(**Deuteronomy 4:2**). A couple of years ago, the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit came to Murfreesboro. Wonder what the curator would have thought if he caught me removing the glass cover and adding some letters with my bic pen? He would have shown his gratitude for my presumption by helping me right out of the building into a police car!

In **Deuteronomy 4**, was Moses concerned that someone would chisel new words into the tablets, or erase portions from them? Not necessarily. A person may commit the same offense by simply practicing something that God did not authorize, or by rejecting something that God required. It’s that simple.

To those who mistakenly claim a record of good works, Jesus will say at the Judgment, *“I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice*

lawless?ness” (Matthew 7:22-23).

Jesus sent His apostles to make disciples, *“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:20).* We have no problem understanding a criminal who holds a gun to our head and says, “Do exactly what I tell you and you won’t get hurt!” Even criminals understand this language. So must we. Our souls are at stake.

“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son”(2 John 9).

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"This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it"
(Psalm 118:24).