

# 2003 Proclaimer

***"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, .. to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord!" - Isa.61:1-2***

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*A teaching and exhortation medium by members of the Carmichael Church of Christ, meeting at 6044 Sutter Ave. Carmichael, CA 95608*

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## **MEASURING ACCEPTABILITY**

*by Walt Sasser*

In **2 Corinthians 8:12** we read, "For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have." This principle of God's word is to be respected, as well as all others. Sadly, there seem to be many areas in which it is being either ignored or forgotten. Let me list a few.

### **1. In Our Giving**

The primary application of course, is in this area, as **giving** is the subject under consideration in the chapter. Today, individuals who give a small amount may be giving "widow's mites" or be sacrificing greatly, in order to give just a few dollars, and be giving more than all the rest in God's sight. On the other hand, those who have greater abundance, though giving a hundred dollars, may be unacceptable, due to their not giving according to what they have.

Likewise, churches may see their fifty dollars a month support of a gospel preacher as only a "drop in the bucket" when compared to the thousands provided by others, but it is accepted according to what one has, not what he does not have.

### **2. In Institutionalism And Sponsoring Church Arrangements**

Both of these, at least in part, have sprung out of a mindset that places accountability beyond a local church's ability. We hear T.V. evangelists constantly appealing for donations so that they can "stay on the air." They have eyes bigger than their pocketbooks and feel that since the work is started, at all costs it must be kept going. Others have begun work that "necessitate" the unscriptural oversight of many church's resources, or the invention of new methods to raise money, or the establishment of church supported or operated institutions and organizations. Little churches are made to believe that since they cannot do **great** works alone, they need to

pool their funds with others to accomplish such. All of this is rooted in a BIG is better and BIG is required mindset that is alien to the Bible.

### **3. In Judging Others By Our Own Standards**

In the public worship, are all the men expected to take part in a leading capacity? What do you think of a brother who does not wish to or says that he cannot? Do you judge him as less important or shame him? Those in leading roles are often regarded as indispensable and given higher esteem than the rest, including all of the women. Spiritual development, growth in Bible knowledge, and abilities to serve are other areas where we may judge others by our own selves and not by what God has said. We sing that there is room in the kingdom for the small things that you can do, but go away thinking and behaving otherwise. The Bible teaches that there was a one talent man (**Matt 25**), who though he failed in his use of the money, was not measured by the five talent man or the one with the two. Jesus said, that the good ground produced some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred (**Mk 4:8**). In another place He said that even a cup of cold water in His name given would be rewarded (**Mark 9:41**). On the other hand, He also said, "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required." (**Luke 12:48**)

### **4. In Measuring Success In Evangelism**

How successful was Noah in his preaching to others besides his own family? How about many of the prophets of old? Were they displeasing to God because only a few were moved by their preaching to repentance? There may be times when no one will believe the gospel. There may be cities where the Lord has "many people" (like Corinth -- **Acts 18:10**), but at the same time cities where a few will believe, but where "the many" will not (like Athens? - **Acts 17**). Our responsibility is in planting and watering. It is God who gives any increase. Therefore our accountability is the sum of our ability plus our opportunity, and that measured by God. But the principle of **2 Cor. 8:12** is disregarded when some of

the methods and philosophies of the Crossroads or Boston Discipling Movement are employed to produce numbers and when churches are pronounced "dead" if a certain quota of baptisms has not been met in a given year. When unscriptural co-operation between churches is used, when social gospel appeals are made, and when simply baptizing people becomes the goal, with conversion to Christ being overlooked, is a part of the problem our misconception about what God expects of us?

### **5. In Determining Local Church Status**

When is a congregation "fully established?" The measure is often whether or not they have a full-time preacher (fully supported by the same church) and have a church building (being paid for). If so, they are "self-supporting". But, if they meet in a rented facility and the preacher receives outside support, they are lacking. Paul told Titus to set in order some things that were lacking in the churches of Crete, one of which was the appointment of elders (**Titus 1:5**), but there is no indication that acquiring a "permanent meetingplace" or the "services of a full-time evangelist" were included. In fact, the Scriptures do not even teach the necessity of having a fully supported, fulltime evangelist, or church building for that matter. Some churches may always meet in some "upper room" and never use evangelists in a full-time capacity, but still be accepted of God. They may never be big in number, able to always meet in some brother's house, and little in power, never able to do much, but be pleasing to God, if faithful in what they have. The Smyrna church is described as being in poverty (**Rev 2:9**) and the Philadelphia church as having little strength (**Rev 3:8**), yet they are the only two out of the seven addressed that are only commended. Of course, it goes without saying, that church buildings and fulltime preachers are fine for some, but not a measure of acceptance to God.

**In conclusion, let me remind you of the teaching;** *"For if there is first a willing mind,*

*it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have."*

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John 12:48

48 "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

## **BECOMING A TRUE NAVIGATOR**

Old sailors like to tell the story of the young sailor learning to become a navigator.\*

Aboard the ship at sea, the captain said to him, "**Please tell us where we are.**" The sailor took a sextant and made the complicated set of calculations. After a while, he wrote down the coordinates of longitude and latitude and handed it to the captain. The captain studied it for a while, checked his charts, and then said to the young navigator, "Are you absolutely convinced that these are the right coordinates?"

**"Yes, sir, I'm absolutely convinced."** "You know exactly where we are?" "Yes, sir." "There could be NO conceivable mistake in your calculations?" "Absolutely NOT, sir. **I've done my best.**"

Then the captain said, "Well, then I would suggest you put on a jacket." "**Why, sir?**" "Because according to YOUR calculations, we are planted squarely at the TOP of Mount Washington!"

**God has given to us a Guidebook to provide guidance for our lives.** This Guidebook is: **the Bible (2 Tim 3:16-17)**. It was given to be "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path" (**Psa 119:105**). Proper use of this God-given Manual not only reveals **where we are** but ALSO **where we need to be!**

**The Bible reveals** – "There is a way that **seems** right to a man – but its END is the way of death." (**Prov 14:12**) We are directed rather to: "Trust in the Lord with ALL your heart and lean NOT on your OWN understanding. In ALL your ways acknowledge

Him and - **HE will direct your paths!" (Prov 3:5-6)**

**The Bible reveals** – that in order to reach our proper destination, we need to be **in Christ**, i.e. in a proper relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ. Our Manual also informs us that a penitent believer in Christ is **baptized into Christ (Gal 3:27)**. **Once in Christ...** we are instructed to CONTINUE to follow the Manual until we reach our intended destination: **Heaven**. Our Guidebook makes known to us that Jesus opened up the way for us through His sacrificial death on the cross for our sins (**Heb 10:19-22**).

*"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker [or, a navigator] who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing [or handling correctly] the word of truth [i.e., our instruction Manual]" (2 Tim 2:15).*

Let US allow the "light" of God's Word to - SHOW- us the proper course. And may we ALSO be diligent to -FOLLOW- that course, so that we may reach that wonderful harbor of heaven!

--From Gordon MacDonald  
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**A true friend is someone who treats you like you are a good egg; even though everyone else realizes that you're slightly cracked.**

**A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way.** - John C. Maxwell

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| <p><b>A computer once beat me at chess, but it was no match for me at kick-boxing.</b></p> |
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# Mind Games That Some Play

The Devil would like to be smarter than God; the Devil's messengers would like to be superior to the Truth of the Word, and avoid simple logic. Snares are constantly set in our paths, and great caution must be exercised in our quest for the right way. The proponents of error enjoy 'reasoning people into a corner'; Christians should also enjoy 'cornering' the false teacher when the souls of men and women are being delivered from false doctrine. We must be set for the defense of the gospel, which requires knowledge of the truth, plus an alert and discerning mind.

1. The unbeliever will say, "There is no such thing as Truth." This must be countered with the question: **"Is your claim that there is no Truth the TRUTH?"**
2. Philosophy professors love to say, "There are no ABSOLUTES." A personal friend, a faithful Christian, was in such a setting at a University when the professor made this claim. He asked the professor, "Are you ABSOLUTELY sure there are no absolutes?" **The class broke out in laughter when the philosopher said, "Yes."**
3. Some argue that there is no truth, but argue that claims made for the truth are false. **How can a claim be false if there is no truth?**
4. Skeptics have doubts about everything. Perhaps they should be asked, **"Do you ever doubt your skepticism?"**
5. Compromisers advocate that no one should take a dogmatic position about anything. They need to consider, **"Have you taken a dogmatic position that no one should take a dogmatic position?"**
6. A preacher friend once told of (and many have experienced the same thing) an experience in a Bible study of a controversial subject when a person emphatically stated that

"we should not debate----debating is wrong". **The preacher reminded the person that they were debating that is was wrong to debate.**

7. And then, the age old demand of only answering by a "yes" or "no", without any explanation or clarification.

Answering this demand by asking this question has usually been successful; "have you quit beating your wife?" (A 'yes' or 'no' answer might not enough.)

8. Have you ever experienced someone insisting that we should be 'neutral'? **Are they 'neutral' while insisting that everyone should be 'neutral'?**
9. And then, we often must reason with people who request that we not attempt to change a person's belief. **Isn't this an attempt to change the person's belief who believes that we should change a person's belief when it is misguided?**
10. More often, we must reason with the position that we should be tolerant of each other, for there are no constant standards of belief. **But, a standard of belief that includes tolerance is required to insist on tolerance.**

Some positions are advocated, and questions asked, out of sincere search for what is right; some for defensive protection of traditions, commandments of men and denominational doctrines. Some argue because they enjoy arguments, finding the truth is not the objective. Be prepared, for we will ultimately face every mind-set when we preach the gospel to every creature.

--Al Payne USA – via Daniel Keith

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