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PRESENTS

Frankly Speaking . . .

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WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR STANDARDS?

The Bible is very specific about the rules by which we should live. There has never been any question in my lifetime that these rules were to be observed, until now.

In recent years there seems to be a number of people, people who should know better, that are failing to live up to these standards. In fact many of them are engaging in acts of commission, not of omission.

In recent weeks I have heard of men, gospel preachers, who have fallen prey to the devils designs. This is especially sad because they are the ones who are supposed to be leading the way in upholding those standards.

One man was let go by the church because he got caught in a prostitution sting, (ala Jimmy Swaggart, remember him.) Another preacher was let go because he borrowed money from several members of the church and would not pay it back, and it wasn't because he was working for starving wages. Another resigned because he had been caught in an "inappropriate relationship" with a woman he had been "counseling." All of these are from just one part of the country, so one wonders how many others there are.

A preacher was molesting his own children in a Midwestern town years ago and is now in prison for the rest of his life. The son of a preacher molested his own daughter and is doing life also. Another preacher ran off with a women with whom he was running each morning. The list could be almost endless and makes one wonder how far it will go and how long it will last. Another preacher has been drinking at the trough of liberal thinking and is

in the process of destroying the church for which he preaches and for which he is also responsible.

The Bible is very specific about individual responsibility, sexual perversion, acceptable doctrine and proper conduct. In a certain way I feel sorry for those who break God's laws and the fate they will find waiting for them at the judgment. "God surely allows us at least one or two frailties and weaknesses," a woman said recently. Or, "God knows how strong and weak we are and will make allowances," said another.

Frankly, I don't believe that and don't believe the Bible teaches any such thing. Notice what the Bible says, "but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to **lust after her** hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matthew 5:28) "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience: wherein ye also once walked, when ye lived in these things; but now do ye also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth: lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him:" (Colossians 2:5-10)

It seems to be the idea of some preachers that they are to be no better and no worse than the average Christian. That is just not true. "but **be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity.**" Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12. Lets face it, preachers are the most influential people in the church. They occupy a special place in the hearts of all those with whom they come into contact. They are before the congregation more than anyone else, including the elders. There is no question that they have more influence. When they act like people in the world they destroy their influence and a lot of people in the process. Such actions does not inspire people to live a better life.

One of the problems that I have noticed through the years is that churches, including elders, do not check many a preacher's background and reputation before bringing him in to work with the church. Of course, that will not always prevent such things from happening but it would cut down on a lot of pain. Most of the time, such things have happened before and it could very well be the reason the preacher is leaving his former work.

While the statement “let all things be done decently and in order,” (1 Corinthians 14:40) may be regarding the worship assembly, it is also a good rule for churches conducting other business. We read in the Bible that elders will “give account” for those under their care, Hebrews 13:17. But make no mistake about it, preachers will also give account of themselves to God as well. Romans 14:12 says “**So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.**”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Smithson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

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