

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

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OF PAPER CLIPS AND FAITH

By Robert F. Turner

Jeremiah said, **“It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”** (Jer. 10:23). Not **“in man?”** Then directions must come from an external source. But the subjectivity of modernism (and of cults which rely upon “feelings”) has made rapid strides among supposed fundamentalists. Some of “our brethren” contend that truth is “relative,” and in the final analysis depends upon the subject (man) for “reality.”

I hold something in my hand—but since you have no means of “knowing” what it is, you can only have your opinion, an educated guess at best. You may say, “I believe it is a pencil,” but this “faith” is purely subjective. You look within yourself and your own experiences, for the answer. Now I tell you I hold a paper clip, and my words become external evidence which you may either accept or reject. I am in a position to know—my words come from the source of truth in this matter. Your faith may now become objective: based upon the revelation of truth, resting upon the integrity of my words; or, you may continue to rely upon your “feelings” about the pencil. The fact remains, I hold a paper clip. You may honestly “misunderstand” my words, or misconstrue them in your subconscious effort to justify that hunch about the pencil—but I continue to hold a paper clip.

The **“things of God”** are known only to God (1 Cor.

2:11-13) and are available to man only through the inspired message. God's word is truth; regardless of man's acceptance or rejection of it (John 17:17). The faith that can save is objective faith; honest, submissive acceptance of the evidence which God provides (Rom. 10:17).

When man presumes to judge God's revelation, accepting or rejecting as human wisdom or experience dictates, man elevates himself above his Maker. He transgresses "law" (abstractly, article) denying the authority of God to regulate His creatures (Jam. 2:10f). But we are to speak and do as they who shall be judged by law (vs. 12). The legislative, executive, and judicial branches of divine government are summed in one, even God (Jam. 4:12). Paul insisted that his message was that which God had revealed unto him. He said, **"My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God"** (1 Cor. 2:4). It is not in man, nor from among men, but from a source external of man that divine truths are revealed. This means we either accept a verbally inspired revelation from God, or stand without certainty of any truth. We have faith (true, objective faith) or wallow miserably in the conflicting philosophies of men.

True objective faith is under fire today from "brethren" who make light of verbal inspiration—openly, or by advocating modern "versions" that do not respect God's words. Such faith is smothered by the "relativists" who ridicule the "certainty" of truth. We are taught relative or subjective faith "for the sake of unity"—and how long will "one God" tolerate us?

THE MOST IMPORTANT CHOICE YOU WILL EVER MAKE

By Marshall McDaniel

Just before his death, Joshua insisted the Israelites make a critical decision, **“Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah”** (Joshua 24:15, ASV). This choice is not, however, exclusive to the Jews. Everyone, from beginning to end, has had to and will have to make this decision. It is ultimately a selection with eternal consequences, life or death (John 5:29). It is up to us which we decide.

First, it is a **personal** choice. **“Choose YOU this day whom ye will serve.”** No one can make this decision for another: Parents can't; friends can't; shepherds can't. Only the individual can. The Lord gives us free-will to make this choice, but remember, if we decide against God, He will permit our selection. As one writer said of those who reject the Lord, “They spend their lives telling God to leave them alone. And at the moment of their final breath, he honors their requests.”

It is, next, a **daily** choice. **“Choose you THIS DAY whom ye will serve.”** There is a specific day that we begin following God; there is no growing into or falling into this decision. For those of us who are Christians, it was the day we turned ourselves over to God and submitted to baptism (Rom. 6:3-7). Yet, that day was only the beginning. Luke 9:23 reads, **“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross DAILY, and follow Me”** (emp. added). We must, therefore, choose this day and every day for the rest of our lives whom we will serve.

Finally, it is a **life-altering** choice. **“Choose you this day WHOM YE WILL SERVE.”** Our lives changed the very first time we sinned; we made a decision to be servants or slaves to sin (John 8:34), but God has made the most liberating offer (Matt. 11:28-30): His proposal relieves the sin-burden, and His sacrifice breaks the shackles of guilt. But choosing God does not come without consequences; Jesus expects us to **“count the cost”** (Luke 14:27-33). Making a resolution to follow God will cost everything: our passions, desires, strengths, and life (Mark 12:30). Yes, eternal life is promised but so is a drastically different life here—one that is *holy* (Rom. 6:19).

Our choices have consequences, but they also have time limits. God has chosen a day when He will judge the world (Acts 17:31). Presently, He has not come, because He **“is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance”** (2 Pet. 3:9). He has decided to give us time, but He will not wait forever. We still have the opportunity to choose God. Let’s not put it off any longer. It is the best choice we will ever make!

NOTES: _____

AM LESSON:

The Kindness &
Severity of God

PM LESSON:

How Should
We Respond?

“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”
(MATTHEW 28:19-20)