

If Ye Then Be.....

“IF” is a part of speech that connects words, sentences, phrases, or clauses. This was presented to most of us in grade school as a conjunction. The word “if” introduces a conditional clause such as; providing that, presuming, supposing, assuming, given that or in the event, to name a few. From this we can clearly conclude that the use of the word “if” will point to an either or statement.

This little word alone is able to provide a marker as to where a person stands in their spiritual walk with Christ. In an era of, “keeping it real” it seems that far too many folks will use this phrase in an attempt to exercise the unregenerate mind in their ministry. I have heard leaders use foul language, get way too graphic, or simply resort to the base nature in their communication in order to relay their message in a “real” way. They have the latitude to interject a certain level of who they are or, simply operate at the base nature while attributing this to a level of spirituality.

In Colossians 3:1, the word says that, “If ye then be risen with Christ”, this is the conditional clause that places an individual in one of two categories. Either a person is in Christ or is not. What is the deciding factor here? The corresponding action deciding the “if” is then stated as this, vs. 1, “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God”. Seeking requires a changing in direction, habits, appetites, desires, in a word, transformation.

The transforming of the mind occurs when it is being renewed in the Word of God. This transformation moves a person far from what they used to be in order to, prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God as in Romans 12:1-2. We make a decision to follow Jesus with the renewed mind. From that process we will, “Set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth” Col 3:2. In no way does it give us any latitude for the flesh to provide any enhancement.

There is a definite separation made here based on what a person will seek after. Seeking those things above is the result of being risen with Christ. This is a higher level of operation as it does not provide an allowance for the flesh to input anything. This level of operation is purposefully moving away from the “Old man” and the ways of that rascal.

There is as much a hybrid of spirit and flesh in the church in this era as there is a falling away from teaching and preaching the Gospel. Church services have been replete with more to please the carnal person than seeking those things which are above. I am not against including enhancements to services as long as they don’t detract from the heart of God. The cry for entertainment etc. in the church has led to multiple activities to please the flesh while minimizing the time spent preparing the saints for battle. Shame! Shame! Shame! There can be no justification for more carnal activities in church then there are those which are designed to prepare and strengthen the saints.

Ephesians 4:11 says, “And He gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

It seems to me that the burden of preparing the saints falls on leadership. The saints are to be perfected for ministry work. If “keeping it real” works, we would have no need for these directions from scripture. The work of the ministry and edifying of the body of Christ has to be accomplished through the perfecting of the saints. Yes, what a novel idea. Grow them up, get them seeking things above where Christ is seated and watch them do the work.

If leaders fail to perfect the saints for the work, we leave it open for anything and anybody to qualify in this capacity. (see I Kings 12:30-32 and 13:31-33)

As leaders, pastors, ministers etc. of the Church of the living God, we need to be mindful to the things of God and not only to the needs and wants of those whom we are to be perfecting. We see the evils creeping on to our shores here in America and our government takes appropriate action to halt the activities of these players but in our churches, we have opened the door and made these evils comfortable. It is time for the church to take a stand and get back to bible basics. Stop trying to keep up with others or separate yourself with some new or shocking ministry.

Let us take this gospel and apply it as it was designed and stop trying to help God by appealing to the faces and emotions of people. II Timothy 4:2 says, Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. Verse 5b says, "Make full proof of your ministry". That is "keeping it real" so, If ye then be risen with Christ.....

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