

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

P. O. Box 93 ~ Nampa, Idaho 83653 www.gentleshepherd.com March 2009

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ~ MAKING DISCIPLES ~ EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY

HYPOCRISY OR LOVE?

Discipleship Series

Part 10

By Rayola Kelley

Last month I talked about having the right motivation. Man is either motivated by the love of God or he is motivated by pride. It is easy to discern between these two motivations. They have different emphasis, attitudes and approaches. Ultimately, these two different motivations will establish the environment or breeding ground that will determine the types of fruit that will be produced in the person's life and relationships.

In last month's article, I contrasted the difference between pride and God's charity or love. Such a contrast allows people to consider the type of breeding ground both of these motivations would produce in a person and in his or her relationships. As for pride, the best it can produce is tolerance and self-serving works. However, in the case of charity it will produce quality devotion and service that will bring glory to God.

Last month I used the word "charity" to set up the right premise concerning godly love. This month I am going to use the word "love." Charity represents the state of being in which all matters are considered and approached. "State," in this text, points to the inward condition of our disposition, which is comprised of spirit, attitudes and prevailing mood. On the other hand, love points to something that is alive and active. In fact, love is the living active fruit of godly charity. The fruit of love manifests itself in joy towards the truth of His Word, peace with God, long-suffering towards others, gentleness in approach, goodness in practice, faithfulness in service, meekness in attitude, and self-control in conduct. It is the active fruit of charity that fulfills the intent of God's moral Law. Since love fulfills the Law of God, the Apostle Paul stated that there is no

law that is able to judge or bring accusation against a life that bears such fruit (*Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:22-23*).

A good example between charity and love can be observed in God. In John's first epistle, he tells us that God is love. In other words, God is a living, active revelation of what love is in action. Such active love is always ready to express itself in charitable ways to others. For example, God showed charity towards us by way of mercy and grace when He gave His only begotten Son as a means to ransom us.

Since each of us is born with a selfish disposition, we do not have such active love operating in us. The flesh's definition of love comes down to how something or someone makes it feel about itself, or whether it stirs up some sensual passion or emotional sentiment. In a sense, the flesh identifies it as "love" when something creates an unrealistic, euphoric environment or expectation as to the happiness something can possibly bring to a relationship based on present feelings. However, such fickle love is based on outward stimulation, not on an inward condition that already exists. Because of this fleshly condition, Christians must first allow a state of charity to be developed within their inner man. Such a state is completely opposite of selfishness, but must be developed before there can be any genuine expression of godly love. From a charitable state, Christians are able to show God the love He deserves, as well as express such love to others through acceptable attitudes and service.

The active seeds of godly love must take root in our hearts. It must grow and develop as we take on the essence and likeness of Jesus Christ. As we take on the mind of Christ, and give way to His life, love will be the natural response to a matter. We will be able to speak the truth in love, as well as strive to increase the function, growth and health of the Body in love.

As saints of the Most High, we will begin to serve and do His will from a heart of love. It is from the heart of love that all issues of life will be regarded (*Proverbs 4:23; Romans 5:5; Ephesians 4:15-16; 6:5-7*).

This brings us to a very important truth concerning our Christian life. Godly love is what makes something genuine and real. What does not come from the heart of love, regardless of whether it is attitude, deeds or conduct, will be considered hypocrisy. Hypocrites are big pretenders or actors. They give a false impression about a matter so they can look a certain way. However, pretending about a matter is not a true presentation, if you are not what you are presenting. For example, a person can present the appearance of love, but if he or she lacks it, then he or she is being a hypocrite. Such outward acts are mere pretenses, illusions, or imitations of what is real. Clearly, hypocrisy simply tries to create the same reality as that which it is trying to imitate, but there will be no spirit or life to it.

A good example of religious piety that was nothing more than an act were the Pharisees in Jesus' day. Jesus referred to them as hypocrites or simply actors acting a religious part. Behind the self-righteous masks, religious robes, and empty words and platitudes were tombs of dead men's bones. The stench of the decay of their dead religion had long dissipated, leaving the silent vacuum of the stifling empty darkness that had engulfed their lifeless ordinances and activities. Jesus stated that all these religious leaders could do was make converts to their hypocrisy, causing these converts to be two-fold the children of hell or destruction.

Due to the affects of sin upon our lives, we all have the potential to be hypocrites in our Christian walk. Whether we become practicing hypocrites depends on what decisions we make in regard to our walk. If, as Christians, we settle for an outward religious façade that hides the real essence of any deviant character, selfish attitudes or self-centered moods, we will become

nothing more than hypocrites. If we play the emotional or religious games to present a righteous appearance, rather than become godly in our lives, we will be nothing more than practicing hypocrites or religious actors.

The active fruit of godly love in our lives is what will make us genuine in our Christian walk. This is why the Apostle Paul made this statement in *1 Corinthians 12:31*: “*But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.*” An important word in this Scripture is the word “way.” The Apostle Paul agreed we could all pursue after and operate in spiritual gifts, but what he wanted each of us to understand is that there is a more excellent way in which to walk out the Christian life that will prove to be beneficial to everyone. He was saying if you do not walk in this excellent way that the gifts you may operate with will have no impact or significance.

We each are walking according to a particular way of doing things. In fact, our ways or terms seem clean in our own eyes. However, in many cases, most people are simply walking according to that which appeases and honors their self-life. Granted, it seems right to them, but it is still motivated by selfishness. Unbeknownst to them, these people will naturally pursue that which will feed their high opinion of self, and will give way to that which brings them temporary satisfaction. However, God’s ways are higher. And, if we fail to come to terms with His way of doing things, we will err in our hearts about the issues of life, as well as fail to enter into the place of rest where we will experience personal contentment, spiritual satisfaction, and victory over the present age in which we are living. (*Hebrews 3:10, 19*)

In *1 Corinthians 13*, the Apostle Paul described the way in which we must walk, that of love. In the state of charity, love will be the natural response to a situation. It will not be something we have to think about, because it will be present and active to respond in an honorable and upright way. Let us now consider how active love works and responds.

Commitment: Godly love is ac-

tually a commitment to do right, or be honorable in attitude, approach and conduct. For example, once reality challenges a married couple’s euphoria or expectations concerning their relationship, they must make a commitment to stay true to each other in spite of the challenges, disappointments or disillusionment they may feel towards one another or their relationship. Commitment is what makes love responsible to do what is right regardless of what is going on. This is why we are instructed to love God with all our mind, heart, soul, and strength. Clearly, we have to make a commitment to be responsible in our relationship with God by making Him the focus of our lives so we can walk in the way He has provided. We do this by being committed to direct the intents and affections of our hearts towards Him. We must also commit our souls to take on Jesus’ disposition, and out of love for Him, all of our strength must come into total subjection to the Holy Spirit to ensure its integrity in service to Him.

Faithful: Since godly love is committed, it will also prove to be faithful to God in all it does. Faithfulness is the main emphasis in godly love. The reason for this emphasis is that faithfulness will naturally require a person to be responsible to see a matter through regardless of the cost. This is why the Apostle Paul made this statement about active love: “*Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*” (*1 Corinthians 13:7*). Faithfulness must be present in three areas to ensure purity and endurance in a matter.

The first area faithfulness must be present in is motive. If a person is faithful in his or her motives, he or she will not allow self to condone, justify or qualify any thought, approach or act that would compromise his or her responsibility. Godly love will always demand that as Christians we are always faithful to offer the best that we have to ensure that a matter is carried out in a most excellent way for the glory of God.

The second area faithfulness must be present in is our emotions. We must be faithful to not let emotions dictate what constitutes reality. We must rein in the momentum of the thoughts and desires of our emotions, discipline their focus, and direct their affections in

order to emotionally land. It is only after people land emotionally that they can be faithful to discern if they are of a right mind towards a matter. Mind points to attitude and prevailing mood. It is only after people emotionally land that they can change their attitude towards something, as well as kick out any prevailing mood that is contrary to the excellent way of love. Once people are of the right mind, they can faithfully come into line with their charitable state in order to properly express love.

The third area of faithfulness has to do with behavior. The only way people can be faithful in their behavior is if they consecrate their bodies to be faithful. Faithfulness that comes out of consecrated lives in God’s kingdom expresses itself in obedience and service. This is why Jesus stated if we truly love Him, we will obey Him. He also stated that people would know we were His disciples because we have the same love for one another.

Sacrificial: Godly love is sacrificial. Jesus put sacrificial love in this text in *John 15:12-14*: “*This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*” Love that has reached the pinnacle expression of selfless sacrifice proves to be a perfect love in motive, attitude and conduct.

Agreement: Jesus stated that if we have sacrificial love, we would know what it means to be friends. True friends have a special bonding or agreement. Godly love will submit to that which is worthy, and show itself honorable as it prefers the well-being of others over itself. Agreement is what causes oneness or like-mindedness about a matter. After all, if people are coming from the same premise because they are motivated by love, they will always be able to come into agreement about a situation.

Do you possess such active love? Without such love, you will not be able to walk out sacrificial service. Love must be at the basis of all we do as Christians. In fact, it walks hand in hand with all the godly virtues. Next month we are going to talk about one of the Christian virtues that love must walk hand in hand with in our Christian life to ensure a victorious walk. †

CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS OR COWARDS?

By Jeannette Haley

“. . . but the people that do know their God, Shall be strong, and do exploits.” – Daniel 11:32b

Every once in awhile we need to stop and take stock of where we are in our Christian lives. This is especially true for us today in light of the perilous times in which we live. If you have not awakened yet to the fact that our country has gone past the point of no return from a Democracy (we lost the Republic decades ago) to Socialism, then please consider these timely quotes: Jan Markell wrote: “In recent weeks it has become more obvious that America is on the yellow-brick road to Socialism.” In 1962 Russian Premier Khrushchev said, “We can’t expect the American people to jump from capitalism to Communism but we can assist their leaders by giving them small amounts of Socialism **until they awaken one day to find out they have Communism.**” He also said that Communism would take over America “without firing a shot.” Karl Marx said, “**A new revolution is possible only in consequences of a new crisis.**” Jan wrote: “We have a crisis. As a matter of fact, unless the world stock markets stabilize, the entire world could be looking at a financial tsunami. Many nations, including America, could be ripe for being taken over by unsavory political efforts ‘without firing a shot.’” (<http://www.olivetreeviews.org/>)

The whole world watched (some with delight, others with horror and amazement) as America plunged headlong into socialism on November 4, 2008. Marxism, all dressed up in the gospel of economic justice, finally, through deceit and deception, elbowed its way to the top while millions swooned and slobbered over their new Commander in Chief, the Kenyan-born “Messiah.” America was indeed taken “without firing a shot.” While the liberal news media gloated and glowed over the “peaceful transition,” we mourned and wept.

Since that fateful day, war has been openly declared on Christians in America. Not that the seething hatred against God, His Word and His people is a new phenomena, but now that

the God-mocking “Messiah” is in power, it’s as if the “lid” that held it down to a dull roar has been blown sky high allowing the angry pot to boil over, threatening to consume anyone who stands in its way. The ungodly wave that is rocking not only this nation, but also the entire world, will not be content until freedom of speech no longer exists. We already see that any opinion that does not line up with the liberals’ politically correct agenda will not be tolerated.

Therefore, if you believe God created the heavens and the earth, that all people are sinners, that killing babies, either unborn or born, is murder, that homosexuality is an abomination to God, that worshipping anything or anyone other than the God of the Bible is idolatry, that any kind of sex outside of marriage is fornication, and that there is a literal heaven and hell, then it is highly likely you will experience persecution. Persecution begins with a ground swell of false accusations, such as occurred against the Jews in pre-Nazi Germany. In this country, the liberals, New Age cults such as the one Oprah Winfrey heads up, and the so-called “progressive” thinkers label evangelical Christians as narrow-minded, unrealistic, radical and hateful. The growing homosexual community accuses Christians of being “terrorists”. Even the so-called “Christian” emerging, post-modern church community has forsaken the “faith once delivered to the saints.”

Evidence of the vitriolic anti-Christian sentiment in this country rose to the surface and unashamedly boiled over against Sarah Palin and her family during the recent election process. It was shocking, to say the least, and a real wake up call for us. The rancor was not so much about policies and politics as it was against the fact that Sarah Palin has a testimony of Jesus Christ, stands against baby killing, supports Israel, and ejected the wicked and greedy politicians of her state. She then returned stolen funds to the people, which is righteousness in action. The vicious and venomous attacks, lies, slander and gross false accusations against her and her family only proves that darkness fears, and despises, the light.

Currently there are over 200 million Christians worldwide experiencing

severe persecution. These believers accept the fact that they risk losing everything they own, including their loved ones, and even their lives, by embracing Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Christians living in such places of severe, relentless persecution consider themselves as already being dead. Prepared to lay down their lives at any hour, they can declare, along with the Apostle Paul, “*But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead*” *Philippians 3:7-11.*

On the other hand, instead of facing the prospect of death because of their faith, the greatest challenge for Christians in America (thus far) is to live for Christ. What does it mean to “live for Christ?” Many would say that living for Christ means going to church at least once a week, paying tithes, and perhaps doing a few good works. Others might emphasize that living for Christ means becoming “super religious,” which might be defined by those who are associated with such a person as being unrealistic, legalistic, judgmental, self-righteous and quite often, just plain obnoxious.

The truth is no one can live for Christ if he or she is not, first, a new creation in Christ. “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” *2 Corinthians 5:17.* Oswald Chambers’ explanation of “The New Man” puts it well. He wrote: “Jesus Christ, as Representative Man, accepted the responsibility of exhibiting on the human plane the absolute holiness of God; he lived up to God’s standard in every detail of holy living and holy speaking

and holy working, and His claim is that through the Atonement He can put us in the place where we can do the same. The very disposition that was in Him is put into me—is it there? If it is not, I will have to answer for it. It is not that God puts the life of Jesus in front of us and says, 'Do your best to follow Him,' but that 'the life also of Jesus' is to 'be made manifest in our mortal flesh.' When 'Christ is formed' in us by regeneration (Galatians 4:19), we have to see that our human nature puts on the 'clothing' that is worthy of the Son of God. That is where our responsibility comes in—not in being absolutely holy, but in seeing that we allow Jesus Christ to be absolutely holy in us. Regeneration does not resolve a human being into imbecility, it lifts him powerfully into oneness with God in Christ Jesus. We shall come to find that 'not under the law, but under grace' does not mean we are so free from the law that it does not matter now what we do; it means that in our actual lives we can fulfill all the requirements of the law of God."

Unfortunately, many well-meaning Christians, in their pursuit for a "deeper spiritual life," have closed down their God-given reasoning abilities and opened themselves up to the demonic realm through the new wave sweeping through the churches of "contemplative spirituality" and the "spiritual formation" movement. Here is the definition of both (taken from Lighthouse Trails Research):

"Contemplative Spirituality: A belief system that uses ancient mystical practices to induce altered states of consciousness (the silence) and is rooted in mysticism and the occult but often wrapped in Christian terminology. The premise of contemplative spirituality is pantheistic (God is all) and panentheistic (God is in all). Common terms used for this movement are "spiritual formation," "the silence," "the stillness," "ancient-wisdom," "spiritual disciplines," and many others.

"Spiritual Formation: A movement that has provided a platform and a channel through which contemplative prayer is entering the church. Find spiritual formation being used, and in nearly every case you will find contemplative spirituality. In fact, con-

templative spirituality is the heartbeat of the spiritual formation movement." (www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com)

This is just one of the many pitfalls and snares that attract and draw people away from real Christianity. The common denominator of counterfeit religious institutions, systems and movements, whether they are overzealous and mystical, or dead and dry is the antichrist spirit. Therefore, the question is how can a person discern, or determine, if his or her religion is of God or not?

William Law, writing on the subject of true religion said: "A religious faith that is uninspired—a hope or love that does not proceed from the direct working of the divine nature within us—can do no more divine good to our souls and can no more unite them with the goodness of God, than a hunger after earthly food can feed us with the immortal Bread of Heaven. All that the natural or uninspired man does in the church has no more of the truth or power of divine worship in it than that which he does in the field or the shop through a desire for more money.

"This is because all the acts of natural man, whether relating to matters of religion or to the world, are equally selfish, and there is no possibility of their being otherwise. Self-love, self-esteem, self-seeking, and living wholly to oneself are all that is or possibly can be in the natural man. Man cannot be any better, nor can he act any higher above this nature, than any beast. No creature can be in a better or higher state than this until something supernatural is found in it, and this supernatural something is called the Word or Spirit or Inspiration of God. This alone can give man the first good thought about God. The Holy Spirit of God is the only force that can cause man to have more heavenly desires than fleshly ones.

"A religion that is not wholly built upon this supernatural ground, but instead stands solely upon the powers, reasonings, and conclusions of the natural, uninspired man, does not have even a hint of true religion in it. Instead, it is nothing, in the same sense that an idol is nothing because it has none of what it is alleged to have. Along the same lines, the work of religion has no divine good in it until

it brings forth and keeps up an essential union of the spirit of man with the Spirit of God. This essential union cannot be formed unless there is love on both sides. More explicitly, it is not merely love, but it is love that has the same divine nature on both sides. ("You will Receive Power", pgs. 13, 14)

This should cause each of us to stop and consider just where we really are in relation to God Himself—not to some religious organization. What is your personal relationship to God aside from your involvement in your church, or religious activities? Are you walking in the Spirit, or are you still motivated by the all-invasive spirit of the world? Keep in mind that the spirit of the world can appear to be very religious, but in essence, it is man exalting. It begins with man, and ends with man, whereas the Holy Spirit begins with God and ends with God, or Jesus Christ. Who are you seeking to please in all things—yourself, others, or the Lord?

The Apostle James wrote: "*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world*" James 1:27. The Apostle John wrote: "*If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us*" 1 John 4:b. Is going to church, where you are entertained with ear-tickling sermonettes and unanointed, man-centered "worship", the sum and substance of your Christian life? Or, are you earnestly seeking God through His Word and prayer so that you might be able to proclaim, "*I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*" Galatians 2:20"? Are you able to say that you understand and obey what the Lord requires of you according to Micah 6:8: "*He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*"

So, you may ask, what does this have to do with persecution of the saints? It has everything to do with it! Unless Christians decide to quit playing church, become sober; rooted and grounded in the Word of God (all of it,

not just isolated Scriptures); know their God, and are established in Christ; are filled with His Spirit and walking in obedience; growing in Him, they will not be able to stand, not only in trials and temptations, but in persecution. Paul warned, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" 2 Timothy 3:12. Matthew 24:9, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you . . ." John 15:20a.

"Well," some may argue, "I put on the armor of God every day." Really? Have you studied the armor of God? It is the Lord Jesus Christ, and His righteousness. Putting on the armor of God is not some mystical practice that magically protects you any more than so-called "holy underwear" is bulletproof. Others may claim, "Well, I've been taught by so-and-do that Christians don't have to go through the tribulation." Really? That's not what the Bible says. (Study Revelation 6 and 7.) The true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ has suffered both tribulation and persecution for two-thousand years! Yes, we shall not suffer the wrath of God, but tribulation for the Body of Christ is just as assured as tribulation (trials, testing, and persecution) was for the Head of the Body. Don't you know that where the Head goes, the Body must follow?

Consider this true story: "How many Anabaptists died during the sixteenth century persecution in Europe? No one knows for sure. What is certain is that at least 1,500 were cruelly tortured and killed. For the most part these were peaceful citizens who did not believe in war and who became the forerunners of today's Mennonites and Amish. The main complaint of the authorities against them was that they did not believe infant baptism had any value. They chose to be re-baptized as willing adults.

"Although no other charges were proven against them, they were sentenced to death. For the men death was usually by fire; for women it was

by drowning. Many Anabaptists proved to be so bold in their final testimony for Christ that authorities began to clamp their tongues before leading them out to their execution so that they could not speak up and win more converts.

"One of the Anabaptists who died in flames was Dirk Willem. His story is particularly touching, because he forfeited a real chance to escape when he turned back to help one of his pursuers.

"Dirk was captured and imprisoned in his home town of Asperen in the Netherlands. Knowing that his fate would be death if he remained in prison, Dirk made a rope of strips of cloth and slid down it over the prison wall. A guard chased him.

"Frost had covered a nearby pond with a thin layer of ice. Dirk risked a dash across it. He made it to safety, but the ice broke under his pursuer who cried for help. Dirk believed the Scripture that a man should help his enemies. He immediately turned back and pulled the floundering man from the frigid water.

"In gratitude for his life, the man would have let Dirk escape, but a Burgomaster (chief magistrate) standing on the shore sternly ordered him to arrest Dirk and bring him back, reminding him of the oath he had sworn as an officer of the peace.

"Back to prison went Dirk. He was condemned to death for being re-baptized, allowing secret church services in his home and letting others be baptized there. The record of his sentencing concludes: "all of which is contrary to our holy Christian faith, and to the decrees of his royal majesty, and ought not to be tolerated, but severely punished, for an example to others; therefore, we the aforesaid judges, having, with mature deliberation of council, examined and considered all that was to be considered in this matter, have condemned and do condemn by these presents in the name; and in the behalf, of his royal majesty, as Count of Holland, the aforesaid Dirk Willems, prisoner, persisting obstinately in his opinion, that he shall be executed with fire, until death ensues; and declare all his property confiscated, for the benefit of his royal majesty."

"Dirk was burned to death on this day, May 16, 1569. His tongue was not

clamped. The wind blew the flame away from him so that his death was long and miserable. Time and again Dirk cried out to God. Finally one of the authorities could not bear to see him suffer any longer and ordered an underling to end his torment with a quick death." (From Gospel.com May 16, 2003 issue)*

The question is what kind of a Christian are you? Have you, before God, made the determination and commitment to be a Christian soldier, one who has no other will, agenda, or goal, but to live and die, (physically, if necessary) for Christ? Or, are you a coward, ashamed of the real Jesus, and making decisions to save your life in this world by hiding behind the façade of liberal (communistic), political correctness? Remember, if you deny Jesus in this life, He will deny you in the next. "But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" Matthew 10:33. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" Revelation 2:10b. The choice is yours. Therefore, ". . . if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" Joshua 24:15.

*(Bibliography: 1. Braght, Thieleman J. van. *The Bloody Theater of Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians, Who Baptized Only Upon Confession of Faith, and Who Suffered and Died for the Testimony of Jesus, Their Savior, From the Time of Christ to the Year A.D. 1660. Translated from the original Dutch or Holland Language from the Edition of 1660 by Joseph F. Sohm.* <http://www.homecomers.org/mirror/head.htm> 2. "Dirk Saves His Enemy." <http://www.goshen.edu/mcarchives/Features/DirkWillems.html> 3. Dyck, Cornelius J. *An Introduction to Mennonite History; a popular history of the Anabaptists and the Mennonites.* Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1967.) †



RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

DO CHRISTIANS HAVE TO OBEY CRIMINAL GOVERNMENTS?

Q: *I am confused about my responsibility towards this liberal, godless president and Congress that are now in power. According to Romans 13:1, I am supposed to become subject to them, but how can I when they oppose everything that I believe in as a Christian?*

A: The Scripture you are referring to is solely concerning relationship to righteous rulers, including those of the true Church of Jesus Christ. If you proceed to *Romans 13:3-4*, you will see the condition that must be met before such subjection would be considered an actual ordinance of God, at which time believers would be required to honor it. Such leaders would not be a "terror to good works, but to evil," and that they would also be identified as being ministers of God because they would ultimately prove to be subject to Him.

It is also important to point out that this Scripture does not specifically mention worldly governments but "higher powers". The Greek word for power in *Romans 13:1* is defined as a "power of choice, or "liberty of doing as one pleases." The concept of choice or liberty points to the idea of possessing a right to do something according to deep moral conviction or religious conscience. For Christians, such power or rights would come down to the right to worship God without repercussions, and the right to do right according to the godly principles of God. If this liberty was not regarded by God's people, Moses would have been killed as a baby, the wise men would have informed Herod of Jesus' location, Corrie Ten Boom would have avoided prison, and all of the Jews would had to accept Hitler's evaluation (as their leader in Nazi Germany) that it was criminal for them to even exist, and that they might as well accept their fate in the ovens. Sadly, this same sentiment exists today towards the Jews, and it is fanning the flames of destruction toward that which will usher in the climatic battle of Armageddon. Hence, enters my paraphrase of the once popular

saying, "When good men do nothing, evil will reign (with a vengeance)."

As Christians, we are not to blindly follow leaders in any arena. We are, first and foremost, citizens of the kingdom of God, and our first loyalty is to our King, the Lord Jesus Christ. Even though we have an earthly citizenship, we still serve in an official capacity as ambassadors of the heavenly kingdom wherever we live, and possess a temporary earthly status until we are officially called home by our King and Lord (*2 Corinthians 5:20; Philipians 3:20; 1 Peter 2:11*).

Clearly, we must always test leaders in any arena to see if they are in subjection to God. Remember, Jesus told His disciples just before His crucifixion to pick up a sword, implying that they needed to be prepared for battle. Peter also put this issue into perspective when he was reminded by the Jewish council that the disciples were commanded to cease from preaching and teaching in the name of Jesus. His reply was that: "*We ought to obey God rather than men*" (*Acts 5:29b*). The Apostle Paul instructed the Christians at Corinth to be followers of him, as he followed Jesus, and reminded the Ephesians that they wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against powers, rulers of darkness of this present world (*1 Corinthians 11:1; Ephesians 6:12*).

Like you, I am aware of the godless caliber of Obama and the majority leadership of the Democrats in Congress. According to evidence obtained, Obama is Kenyan born, making it illegal for him to even hold the office of the president, which reveals him to be nothing more than a fraud and an imposter that should be prosecuted by our courts and clearly stripped of his status. Besides mocking the Bible, moving quickly to dismantle the strength of this country to bring it down to a third-world status, which will ultimately make us beggars on the international front, and showing complete contempt for those who would dare oppose his communistic worldview by using his main manipulative card of racial bias as a means to silence them and confuse the real issues, he has done everything to bid our enemies to come in and utterly destroy us.

Since the Democrats perceive they have been given free rein to pursue their wicked agendas, the leadership has become drunk on power that is running amuck under their watch at the great cost of the people of this nation. These leaders are making moves that clearly prove they are a force of "terror against good works instead of evil works," such as promoting abortion and pushing homosexual values down the throats of those who believe that, without true moral accountability and the discipline that protects godly values from those who clearly hate God and His righteousness, this nation will collapse in on itself. For the reasons stated, I do not consider Obama my president, while I also sadly have to admit that I am utterly ashamed of what we refer to as "Congress," which are comprised of people who have displayed the immaturity of spoiled, quibbling and vengeful children instead of sane, responsible leaders. I will have no agreement or part with what I perceive to be a group of imbeciles in bringing this nation to utter destruction. I have no doubt that those who exalted Obama will turn around and sacrifice him when the time is ripe, but meanwhile the seeds of revolution are being planted that will rip this country apart as the means to bring this nation into a one-world government.

For you and me we must pray for God's mercy, protection and intervention for His people. We must warn Christians to not go to sleep, but to humbly pray for forgiveness for complacency and worldliness, wisdom from above, guidance of the Spirit and godly instruction, and to always be alert to move, as well as be ready to stand when giving an account of the hope that is in every saint (*1 Peter 3:15* refer to *Colossians 1:27*). †

"Obama is a radical communist, and I think it is becoming clear. That is what I told people in Illinois and now everybody realizes it's true," said Keyes, who ran unsuccessfully against Obama for the state's open Senate seat in 2004. "He is going to destroy this country, and we are either going to stop him or the United States of America is going to cease to exist."
—Alan Keyes