

# Fulton County Gospel News

*Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World*

“. . . Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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## KNOW THYSELF

by Chris Perry

In the ancient Greek town of Delphi once stood a temple dedicated to the Greek mythological god Apollo. This temple supposedly housed the renowned oracle of Delphi, a source of “wisdom” to which many pilgrims traveled. According to tradition, these words were etched in stone above the entrance: *Gnothi se auton* [translation: “Know thyself”].

What is left of ancient Delphi stands as a monument to the futility of seeking wisdom and understanding from any source other than God (compare with 1 Corinthians 1:18-21). However, the phrase “Know thyself” might be worthy of further examination. While the statement was undoubtedly meant to place undeserving emphasis on the wisdom of man, there is a nugget of truth underlying the simple phrase that can be useful to the modern Christian.

Self-deception is an epidemic that has cost many their souls throughout the history of mankind. The people of Israel deceived themselves into believing that they were faithful to God—in the midst of sin they perceived themselves as “*seek[ing] Me daily, and delight[ing] to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness*” (Isaiah 58:2). Saul was obviously self-deceived when he claimed before Samuel, “*Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me*” (1 Samuel 15:20), completely ignoring

the fact that he had expressly disobeyed God’s command to utterly destroy the Amalekites (verses 3, 9). In the New Testament, mention is made of those who should be “*doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*” (James 1:22). As well, John responds to those who claim to be without need of the saving blood of Christ: “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*” (1 John 1:8).

Today, as in the past, self-deception takes on many forms. The denominational person practices self-deceit when he convinces himself that he is destined for heaven, despite standing in direct contradiction to God’s Holy Word. The erring Christian practices the same when he persuades himself that as long as no one knows of his sin, it does not matter. Many husbands and wives live in self-deceit about the state of their marriages; many parents live in self-deceit about the characters of their children; and so on. Like a disease, self-deception eats away at our desire to grow, our willingness to face the challenges of life, our interest in hearing the instruction of God and others who love us. It breeds laziness, complacency, and compromise. It is one of the most powerful tools of Satan, and he wields it with great skill.

The remedy for self-deception? *Gnothi se auton*. We must *take the time* and *make the effort* to know

ourselves. While Satan whispers, “You’re okay like you are,” God’s inspired Word commands, “*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*” (2 Corinthians 13:5). The word translated *examine* means to “test objectively,” and *prove* carries a similar connotation. “*Know ye...your own selves*” might be literally translated, “Get acquainted with yourselves enough to know...”<sup>1</sup> The point should be clear: while Satan is attempting to convince us we are where we need to be, God desires for us to constantly be striving, testing, and measuring ourselves against His standard, the “*perfect law of liberty*” (James 1:25).

Of course, doing as God requires takes great honesty and courage. There are few things more difficult than admitting wrong, especially if that wrong is ingrained deep in our lives and/or has been assumed right for many years. Conversely, there are some who find it just as challenging to embrace the areas in their lives in which they are doing well. They find it difficult to escape the guilt of their past actions, even if those actions have been forgiven by God. There is a fine line between “*forgetting those things which are behind*” (Philippians 3:13) and basking in self-deceit, just as there is between “*buffet[ing] my body*” (1 Corinthians 9:27) and wallowing in self-pity.

Dave Weber, a motivational speaker specializing in workplace

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P.O. Box 251  
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Lee Moses .....EDITOR  
Phone .....(870) 625-3217  
E-Mail .....cocfgn@centurytel.net  
Website...www.fultoncountygospelnews.org  
Brian Dixon .....Webmaster  
E-Mail .....halopages@yahoo.com

*continued from page 1*

relationships, describes the “Seven Me’s That I Am” as: the me I think I am; the me others see; the me I used to be; the me I want to be; the me I really am; the me others try to make me; and the me I try to project.<sup>2</sup> Each of these “me’s” is a powerful dynamic in the way we interact with others; however, only one actually stands before God: the “me” I really am. As God said to Samuel concerning David’s brothers: “*Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature...for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart*” (1 Samuel 16:7). Our goal, then, is to find that person we really are, shape it and mold it according to God’s Holy Word, and allow the light that emanates from it to “*shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father*

*which is in heaven*” (Matthew 5:16). We cannot be saved unless we grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18; compare with 1:10), and we cannot grow if we do not know in which areas we need to grow.

Dear friend, for the love of your soul, *know thyself*.

303 DeKalb Street  
McMinnville, TN 37110

<sup>1</sup>Strong’s Complete Dictionary of Bible Words

<sup>2</sup> Taken from a seminar, but reference his book, *Sticks and Stones Exposed: The Power of Our Words*.

**POLITICALLY  
CORRECT DEITIES**

by Randy Robinson

When it comes to religious practice, we can only wonder what goes through the minds of those who are not satisfied with what the Bible says. How can anyone’s religion be considered legitimate when they abandon the Scriptures in order to conform to the politically correct dogma of today? A recent Associated Press article reflects this observation. It is entitled, “Presbyterians may rename ‘Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.’” What unmitigated gall! The very idea that some created beings would dare to tamper with the names of Deity. What can they be thinking?

The Presbyterian church was founded by John Calvin, the father of Calvinism, a false doctrine that includes the concept of total hereditary depravity, the direct operation of the Holy Spirit apart from the Word, preservation of the saints otherwise known as “once saved, always saved,” which in turn has fostered an inaccurate view of predestination. Their concept of predestination claims that God has arbitrarily designated those who are saved and lost and that fate is indelibly sealed forever. If you are lost, you can do

nothing to be saved, and if you are saved you can do nothing to be lost. This is contradictory to plain Bible teaching—Jesus entreats the spiritually weary to rest, “*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*” (Matthew 11:28, emphasis RR). “*Whosoever will*” has the opportunity to “*take the water of life freely*” (Revelation 22:17). The predestination of which the Scriptures speak (Ephesians 1:5) is that God has chosen those who choose to be obedient to His will to inherit eternal life. Therefore, these and other false doctrines and practices nullify any claim that they may make to be the Lord’s church.

Some of the changes to the names of Deity that have been proposed by certain members of the Presbyterian church are: “Rock, Redeemer, Friend,” “Creator, Savior, Sanctifier,” “Lover, Beloved, Love,” “King of Glory, Prince of Peace, Spirit of Love.” The issue is not one of accuracy. These terms are accurate. However, we come to the particularly egregious, “Mother, Child, and Womb,” and there we discover the impetus for these proposed changes. Some modern day “enlightened ones” have become “uncomfortable” with references to Deity solely reflected in the use of **male** terms and pronouns. They have been indoctrinated with political correctness and consider these sole male references to Deity as discriminatory. The problem with that position is that there is nothing arbitrary or ambiguous about the Biblical language that describes Deity in the male gender. The language cannot be construed to allow any leeway in referring to Deity in any other form or fashion than as the male gender. This is nothing but a cheap attempt to pacify and placate the politically correct. The fact that the Presbyterian Church has been “studying” this issue since 2000 is an indication of their lack of

respect for God and His Word. One cannot help but wonder whether John Calvin himself would arrive at such conclusions. We may speculate that he would be appalled at the very idea of changing the names of Deity and the time that has been spent [wasted] examining this issue. Even as theologically flawed as Calvin was, there were certain things on which he was correct, one of which was his contention that mechanical instruments should not be used in worship, a stance that the Presbyterians have since ignored.

This action was taken under advisement at Presbyterian Church U.S.A.'s recent national assembly in Birmingham, Alabama. Delegates to this convention voted to "receive" this policy paper, but stopped short of approving it. In other words, while allowing individual churches to experiment with alternative liturgies for the Trinity, no one will be forced to do so.

We note some of the justification for even entertaining such a notion. One Iowa woman was quoted as saying, "This does not alter the church's theological position, but provides an educational resource to enhance the spiritual life of our membership." How changing the male gender references to Deity to female or ambiguous references are supposed to enhance anyone's spiritual life is unclear, unless this is a typical attempt to make people "feel good about themselves." The panel that has been examining this issue states, "The classical language for the Trinity should still be used," but added "Presbyterians should seek 'fresh ways to speak of the mystery of the triune God' to 'expand the church's vocabulary of praise and wonder.'" This is so typical of this 21<sup>st</sup> century "touchy, feely, getting in touch with your emotions" society that we have become. Instead of looking for fresh ways to speak of the mystery of the triune God, they

would do well to "*Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls*" (Jeremiah 6:16).

How can anyone seriously refer to Deity in the female gender when the Bible is replete with examples otherwise? Jesus addressed God as "Father" [Matt. 26:39; John 11:41; 17:1; et al.]. The Father called Jesus His Son (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Hebrews 1:5). Jesus promised His disciple the coming of the Holy Spirit with repeated male pronoun references (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-8). To tamper with these references is to assault the Bible's claim of inspiration.

God is not pleased with those who act frivolously with His name. His name is holy (Psalm 103:1; Matt. 6:9). It is to be exalted (Psa. 34:3). The name of Jesus is the name by which salvation is offered to man (Acts 4:12). It is also exalted (Philippians 2:9). God warned that those who take His name in vain or misuse it in any way will be held accountable (Exodus 20:7).

The panel made another outrageous observation. They claim that the language limited to the Father and Son "has been used to support the idea that God is male and that men are superior to women." The reason the language supports that God is male is because it is true! One might wonder if this panel considered at all that Jesus came to earth **as a man**, not a woman (Matt. 1:21; 1 Timothy 2:5). As far as men being superior to women, that is not a concept that is endorsed in the Scriptures. The woman was the crown jewel of creation, being the final creation of God (Genesis 2:22). Paul wrote that in the kingdom of heaven there are no positions of superiority (Galatians 3:28). Peter distinctly declared that men are to honor women (1 Peter 3:7). Within the church, men have been given

positions of leadership, but Paul explained why this was done: 1) the order of creation—Adam first, then Eve and 2) Eve was deceived in the transgression. This was also the reason that God made man the head of the home (Gen. 3:16; Eph. 5:22). This is in no way an indication that men are superior to women.

In the next to last paragraph of this article in a sort of "by the way" reference, the assembly was to also vote on a proposal to give local congregations and regional presbyteries some leeway in ordaining clergy and lay officers living in homosexual relationships. Conservative groups within the church are predictably protesting such a policy. If recent history is any indicator this resolution will pass regardless of the conservative protests. Such is the case when people are more concerned with being politically correct than religiously correct. These actions will no doubt, bring praise from the world, however they face the wrath of God Who will root up this illegitimate plant as He will all of those that He has not planted (Matt. 15:13). One cannot help but wonder why these people even bother calling themselves a religion when they are so bent on defying the living God and His Word and are truly seeking to please themselves.

P.O. Box 1104  
Hamilton, MT 59840-1104

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## FIRST PLACE, OR NO PLACE!

by David McCain

Jesus said, "*Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple*" (Luke 14:33). The simple truth is, Jesus, as Commander in Chief of His army, expects absolute loyalty from His troops. The Lord demands first

place in your life, or He wants no place at all. You can't be a wishy-washy, on-again off-again friend of Jesus. If you value any relationship, any possession, or any position more than you value Christ and your standing with Him, then you are unworthy to be His follower.

Loyalty as the friend of Christ requires complete obedience to his commands. Jesus said, "*Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*" (John 15:14). Loyalty to Christ means complete allegiance to His cause. In other words, Christ and His church must come first, before school, work, hobbies, vacation, recreation, friends, relatives—before everything! Sometimes that requires sacrifice, but if we truly love the Lord, we will be willing to sacrifice for Him, even as we do for any person or cause we truly care for in our lives.

If we love other people more than Christ, then we are unworthy of Him (Matt. 10:37). If we care more about our earthly relationships than we do about our heavenly relationship, then we are unworthy of the Lord's love. If we give temporal, earthly things more value, time, and care than we do eternal, heavenly things, then we cannot be His disciples. Jesus said, "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it*" (Matt.16:24-25).

Brethren, are we willing to deny ourselves anything, in order to promote the cause of Christ? Or, have we saved our lives for our own selfish purposes, only to lose them eternally? We sometimes wonder why the cause of Christ does not prosper, when the answer glares before our eyes. The problem lies with a lack of loyalty to Christ. Across our brotherhood, attendance at worship, Bible study services, and Gospel Meetings wanes. Why? The

answer is obvious, isn't it? It's because too few are loyal to Christ. As the old saying goes, "Most of the time in life, you do what you really want to do," which is just as true in religion as in any other realm.

Are you loyal to Christ? Can He count on you to put Him first, before all other people, things, or commitments? Are you loyal to Him in attitude, articulation, and action? Can He depend on you? Think about it! Remember, Christ demands first place in your life, or He wants no place at all.

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**GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION**

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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