**Truth and Application**

*by Kyle Campbell*

The Bible, along with imparting God’s revealed truth on many spiritual subjects, also adds multiple admonitions for the purpose of proper application. In our day and time, there are a lot of people who say that they hold to truth on a certain subject. That may be the case, but do they righteously apply it?

Paul says, *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”* (Ephesians 5:11). There seems to be a dangerous double standard among brethren which needs to be carefully watched. For example, most non-institutional churches would not ask someone to preach who supports human organizations out of the church treasury to preach as full-time evangelists and preach in gospel meetings. However, they will ask men who believe and teach error on divorce and remarriage to come into their congregations. What makes the topic of institutionalism more important than the subject of divorce and remarriage (or any other topic which would cause someone to sin)?

What about the subject of fellowship? If someone believes and teaches error on the subject of fellowship, would it be right for a congregation to use them? John wrote, *“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son”* (2 John 9). Would we ask a Baptist to come and preach a lesson on salvation? No! What makes the subject of salvation more important than the subject of fellowship? Is the subject of fellowship a valid subject over which to draw lines of fellowship? Some do not believe so today!

In Manasseh’s day, he *“… set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God …”* (2 Chronicles 33:7). This compromise was abominable to God. Are we doing the same? Why are a portion of our brethren still holding fast on some subjects, but yielding to compromise on others? *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith …”* (2 Corinthians 13:5). Let’s stand fast (1 Corinthians 16:13)!

**Taking Heed to Our Hearing**

*by Harry Osborne*

Since our meeting with Kyle Campbell starts next Sunday, it would be a good time for us to consider our responsibility as hearers. We often note the responsibility of teachers and preachers in speaking the truth, but we must remember that all of us have responsibilities with respect to proper hearing. The gospels contain two admonitions given by Jesus in regards to proper listening. In Mark 4:24, our Lord instructed, *“Take heed what you hear.”* In Luke 8:18, He said, *"Therefore take heed how you hear."* If we are to listen as Jesus wants us to listen, we must "take heed," not only to **what** we hear, but also to **how** we hear. Where can we go for instruction on hearing God's truth?

James tells us several things about becoming acceptable hearers. In James 1:21-27, the principles are recorded for us.

*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls* (James 1:21).

We cannot receive the word of God as we ought if filthiness and wickedness abide in our lives. The message of Christ reproves such evil and cannot coexist with it. Just as filthiness and wickedness are inconsistent with God's truth, "meekness" is an essential quality for all who desire God's word to have a lasting impact upon their lives. The word translated "meekness" in our Bible refers to the strength of character which is brought under the controlling harness of God's will. It is the willingness to let God direct our path.

James does not stop at that point. He goes on to instruct, *"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves"* (James 1:22). God wants us to be the kind of hearers who put His instruction into action. He does not want His truth to merely change our intellect. Proper hearing of God's word should change our lives! Notice how useless non-active hearing is to God:

*For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was* (James 1:23-24).

Why would we look in a mirror if we did not intend to correct that which is amiss? It would make looking in the mirror a waste of time. So it is with those who read the Bible, but never intend to change that which they find to violate the will of God. The word of God is designed to scrutinize our heart and prick us to change our ways (Hebrews 4:12-13). It was never meant to satisfy mere intellectual curiosity.

James goes on to show the way we should react to God's message. *"But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does"* (James 1:25). God demands that we remember His message in our day-to-day activities, not forget it when we close our Bible. But what evidences us continuing in God’s word?

*If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world* (James 1:26-27).

According to James, proper hearing demands that we cease actions that are not approved by God and do those things which God does approve within His truth. We must be seeking to let God direct our actions to please Him as is shown within His word. It is just that simple.

If we claim to hear God, we will not reject any instruction found within His will for us today. We may not put evil into our lives and still be true hearers of God. Conversely, we cannot be the kind of hearers God requires if we fail to let His word live in our actions daily by obeying it. Let us learn to listen, taking heed to **what** and **how** we hear as God’s will is taught.

Kyle Campbell’s Lessons for Next Week’s Meeting:

Sunday 9AM: “Human Philosophies of Authority”

Sunday 10AM: “Are You Ready for School?”
Sunday 11AM: “The Death of a Church”
Monday 7PM: “We Have Found the Messiah”
Tuesday 7PM: “What Is an Undenominational Christian?”
Wednesday 7PM: “What Have They Seen in Your Home?”