

# THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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## ***“Playing the Christian Game”***

**By Steve Niemeier**

“...And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” (Acts 11:26). From the Day of Pentecost until now – the teaching from the word of God is consistent on what a proper definition of a Christian is. One who has heard the word of God and develops the belief from the gospel that creates within the heart the desire to change or repent from the way of darkness. Upon that realization that change is needed one is willing to confess and live a life of confessing that Christ is the Son of God. Meeting Him in the watery grave of baptism for the remission of sins then is the concluding factor to putting on the new man which allows one to be called a Christian just as those in Acts 11:26 were called.

However, this is not the end of the process – it is the beginning of the process for salvation. Acts 8:13 states that Simon (the sorcerer) believed and was baptized which allowed him to be called a Christian. However, Acts 8:18-24 relays the events of this one who was baptized to be rebuked because his heart was not right with God. He was told to pray to God for forgiveness. Included in asking for forgiveness is the act of repentance – where one changes from the sin they are practicing to a life reflecting Christ – a Christian!

It seems that today we have those who “play the Christian game”. We hear the conversation found in Matthew 18:21-22 between Peter and Jesus quoted over and over about forgiving 70 times 7. Many who continue to live in the sin of pleasure when caught use this crutch and deceive brethren by going

through the “act of repentance” of going forward and asking for prayers and yet go right back into the sinful life they had been living until caught again and then here comes the crutch again!

Marriages and families have been torn apart by those who play this game. Congregations have been torn apart by those who play this game. This game is sinful and Satan is the winner in this game – the one playing it is going to lose their soul so they are not winners – the Lord’s church has a hypocrite occupying a pew – the local congregation has a member who is deceiving the other members – yet the selfish and stubborn individual playing this Christian game thinks they are so much smarter than the others because they believe that the poor souls who are trying to follow the teachings of the word of God just have to forgive them and let them go on playing the game.

What many do not want to face up to is that Peter told Simon in Acts 8:22 to pray that the THOUGHT OF YOUR HEART may be forgiven. The true intent of the heart can be told by ones actions and words. Yet one may be very good at playing the Christian game to the extent that they may fool the elders and the congregation – but God knows the intent of our heart – He will take vengeance – TRULY REPENT NOW if you are playing this game as the Day of Judgment is approaching and the game ends on that day and the winner will be God – not Satan and certainly not the one “playing the Christian game.”

## ***“The Need to Clean Our House”***

**By Steve Niemeier**

The dreaded knock comes from the front door – who is it? Our house is a mess – we do not want anyone to see our house in this shape. Let’s all be quiet and whoever it is will think that we have run out for a while. Does this ever occur in your house?

I am sure that all of us have had times where our house looks “lived in” and that most of us have a day of the week that

we consider to be house cleaning day. Sometimes we have spring cleaning in the spring – fall cleaning in the fall – and even certain times of the year that we clean out the garage – our drawers and our closets. Yet, while many try to live in a “clean house” there are some houses that are very dirty and not ever picked up or straightened up – organization and the desire to have the clean house is just not there – so they live in the filth and un-organization that usually creeps over in the other aspects of their lives.

Hezekiah was told in II Kings 20:1 “Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.” Later, Hezekiah was asked in II Kings 20:15 by Isaiah “What have they seen in your house?” This was a question asked because Hezekiah had opened his house to the messengers from Babylon and showed them all of his treasures.

Let us deal with the first thought given to Hezekiah – what is it that we need to do spiritually to set our house in order? Is the husband the head of your house? Does he lead and guide in a way that all could follow him in the footsteps of Jesus? Does he have the best interest of the wife and family foremost in his mind? Can he be trusted by his wife and family? In our house does the husband need to get himself in order because he is the cause of disorder in the house?

We need to ask the question to the wife also. Are you’re the helpmeet that your husband can depend upon? Are you’re the keeper of the home that you are commanded to be? Are you the mother that your children can see the light of Jesus shining through? Can you be trusted by your husband? Are you constantly nagging and being negative toward your husband? In our house does the wife need get herself in order because she is the cause of disorder in the house?

Children are not exempt from this situation – as children grow and recognize right from wrong they have a responsibility to assist in keeping the house in order. In our house do our children need to get themselves in order because they are the cause of disorder in the house?

The question posed by Isaiah to Hezekiah then comes to all houses and that is what has been seen in our house? Not what man has seen – you can camouflage what man sees – but what does God see in our house? He is the one that sees all of our treasures (our thoughts and intents of the heart) – He is the one that is there when every discussion or argument is conducted – he is there when we make the decisions that are either for Him or against Him. Is it time for a “house cleaning?”