

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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If You've Never Been Called a Fanatic

By Bill Hall

Webster defines the word "fanatic": "A person affected by excessive enthusiasm." Its definition indicates that it is a relative term, dependent upon one's judgment as to what is a proper degree of enthusiasm in contrast with what is excessive enthusiasm.

Anyone who has any knowledge at all of the world and its standards knows that to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," (**Matt. 6:33**) and to "love the Lord with all one's heart, soul, and mind," (**Matt. 22:37**) and to "present one's body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (**Rom. 12:1**) is to be in the eyes of the world a fanatic.

Nevertheless, before becoming too concerned, one should realize that every Bible character whom he admires—Paul, Peter, John the Baptist,

Eunice, Hannah, Jesus—would be looked upon by the world as a fanatic were he or she living today. On the other hand, the world would smile approvingly on those of whom the Lord said: "So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth" (**Rev. 3:15-16**).

If you've never been called a fanatic, you might need to reconsider your spiritual condition before God.

Young Lady, Marry a Christian

By Bill Hall

Before any young lady marries a non-Christian, she should consider the following problems which so often face the Christian in a mixed marriage.

1. Problems in attending services.

She should ask herself, "What will I do when my husband some Lord's day drives away in the car at 9:15, leaving me with no transportation to the

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service?" "What will I do when my husband announces that his company is moving us to some distant community where no church of the Lord meets?" The husband may not be as co-operative as the young lady thought he would be.

2. Problems in giving. The young lady recognizes that if they are to reap bountifully, they must sow bountifully. She loves the Lord and His work, and wants to give liberally in support of it. Her husband, however, does not share her convictions and interest. He feels that a dollar is plenty to give.

3. Problems in training children. Yes, some have succeeded in bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord without the help of their companions. Eunice succeeded with Timothy. Other good women have succeeded. But the influence of a father is great, and many are the women who have not been able to overcome this influence to see their children become Christians.

4. Problems in overcoming the influence, of one's companion. Marrying with the hopes of reforming one's companion is a

dangerous thing. Often the companion is lifted to a higher standard, but seldom to the standard of a Christian. Instead, as the non-Christian's standards are raised, the Christian's standards are lowered, so that the two meet somewhere in between. The young lady should realize that the man whom she marries will be the greatest earthly influence on her life, and she should ask herself, "Will this man help me to go to heaven?"

5. Emotional problems. The problems faced in life are great, but the emotional problems faced in death may be greater. Recently a godly woman, having just received word of her husband's death in an automobile accident, cried, "Why couldn't it have been me or one of the children, for my husband was not ready to die?"

The young person reading this is probably thinking, however, that she will convert her husband. She may be able to do so, but statistics show that her chances really are not very good. For every one who has been successful in converting her husband, there are several who not only failed in converting their husbands, but were influenced by them to return to the mire of

sin and to enter the ranks of the unfaithful. No, the risk is too great. The only safe course is for Christians to marry Christians.

Heavenly Power **in Human** **Relations**

By W. Frank Walton

"Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them."
(Luke 6:31)

Jesus' dictum of human relationships is the "golden rule" of all ethics. Imagine what a wonderful world it would be if this was actually practiced!

In the debate between the militant atheist Christopher Hitchens and the apologist Dr. William Lane Craig, Mr. Hitchens said that Christianity's ethics are no better than other world religions. He attempted to show that what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount (**Luke 6:31; Matthew 7:12**) about treating others is essentially no different than other major religious teachings.

Well, let's see...

Judaism: Jewish Rabbi Hillel, asked to teach the meaning of the Law standing on one foot, said: "What you hate yourself, do not to your neighbor. This is the whole Law. The rest is

commentary." (Talmud, Shabbat 31a)

Confucius: "Do nothing to your neighbor which afterward you would not have your neighbor do to you." (Analets 15:23)

Hinduism: "This is the sum of duty: do nothing unto others which would cause you pain if done to you." (Mahabharata 5.5157)

Buddhism: "Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful." (Udana-Varqi 5:18)

Taoism: "Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss." (T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien)

Islam: "No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself." (Sunnah)

Notice something profoundly different in Jesus' teaching versus these other religious teachings? Other religions emphasized simply avoiding harming someone, or at best, wishing for them what you would like for yourself.

Beyond polite ethics, Jesus Christ taught us to actively treat others, in all interactions, as you would want to be treated yourself, if the situation was reversed. This is sacrificial goodwill. This is another way of

saying, "love your neighbor as yourself" (**Mark 12:31**). Loving God, which empowers love for others, is the highest goal of the New Testament (**Mark 12:30**).

Love is active, outgoing goodwill to seek the highest good of another. Love is undefeatable benevolence of doing them only good and not harm. This selfless altruistic goodwill of love can only be learned and empowered from the God of perfect love and grace (**Eph. 5:1-2, 1 John 4:19**). We must be converted from selfish sinners to selfless saints of God. Jesus showed this love by dying on the cross for sinners (**1 John 3:16**).

Agape love was a new concept revealed by the New Testament of Jesus Christ, who taught us to love our neighbors and also our enemies (**Matt. 5:44**). This is not to overlook or empower bad behavior in others but it is always being guided by acting in what is in their ultimate best interest. This empowerment of love comes only from the gospel of Christ. Christianity is truly a heavenly religion.

"We must look for the opportunity in every difficulty, instead of being

paralyzed at the thought of the difficulty in every opportunity."