ON THE HOME FRONT

Gary Colley

Sorrow has once again come to the family of the Getwell brethren in the passing of our sister in Christ Shirley Baldridge. As much as possible she was faithful to the services of the Lord’s church and a great encourager to all. When her neighbor was cleaning out her car, he found her Bible on the front seat along with several of our bulletins open to the articles on “Where In The Bible Will I Find,” and also copies of The SPIRITUAL SWORD PUBLICATION. We offer our sympathy to her family, brethren, and friends as they remember her and mourn her passing.

It is always good to hear from our bulletin readers! They give insight into their needs and desires. It helps us to write things that are of importance to them and in areas that are most needful to people in general. We are grateful for those who are growing in knowledge as well as in the actions of grace and the faithfulness of our Lord. We recently heard from our good friend James W. Berry, Montgomery, AL, and appreciated his letter! It read: “September 12 I will be 80 years old. I have all the copies of the SPIRITUAL SWORD. Suggestion: If we take one SPIRITUAL SWORD and study it every month, after this we would know more of the Bible in 48 months. You might want to suggest this to others. This would be a good 4 year study. In Christ, James W. Berry.” Thank you, brother Berry, for your great suggestion!
Having given Bible references last week to show the evils of alcohol, we will show this week, in addition to the Bible, the common sense answer to the great evils of alcohol. Please think with us: What is it that kills more each year than the total number that were killed in the Vietnam war? What is it that causes more homicides, suicides, fatal air crashes, and fatal car wrecks each year than any other cause? What is it that causes more broken hearts because of broken homes each year than any other cause? What is it that brings more lost time at work, more abuse of spouses and children, and more damage to the property of others each year than any other cause? What is it that affects the liver, weakens the muscles and bones, and gives an increased risk of cancer to the stomach, mouth, throat, and pancreas? What is it that causes heart disease, destroys brain tissue, and causes personality disorders to thousands each year? What is it that causes 8,000 plus teen deaths per year and another 40,000 to be maimed and disfigured people? THE ANSWER TO ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS IS ALCOHOL! We have given a multiplicity of Scriptures condemning the drinking of intoxicating beverages, but some refuse any and all of these as not applying to themselves. We have shown the verses that warn and condemn drunkenness, whether by “social drinking” or by fall down, sot drunkenness. But for those who want MONEY, more, evidently, than they care for the welfare and health of our youth and community, that would make no difference! Would those who push for the sale and use of alcoholic drinks be willing to sign the following statements? (1) I do not believe drinking damages my reputation and influence. (2) I believe I can teach one about Christ and His church with a drink in my hand. (3) My fervor, interest, and involvement in the spiritual work of the church is as strong or stronger now as it was before I started drinking. (4) I am now more generous in my giving to the church and other worthy causes since I began to drink. (5) I would be perfectly comfortable to meet Jesus, when He comes the second time to judge the world, with a drink in my hand. (6) Drinking has been good for my marriage; we have a more spiritual relationship now since drinking became a part of our lives. (7) I believe that my influence on my children is enhanced, and I have no objection to them following my example in this matter. Drinking will hurt us EXTERNALLY, INTERNALLY, AND ETERNALLY! “Think on these things” (Phil. 4:8).
Defender or Pretender?

Billy R. Davis, Ph.D. USAF Ret.

In 1 Peter 3:14-16, the apostle Peter by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, penned these words:

“But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed, And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.” (emp. added, NASB).

God certainly chose the right individual to discuss this subject! Peter made the painful—but meaningful—sojourn from Pretender to Defender as he wrestled with his frailties, inhibitions, and false sense of spirituality. He proudly “thumped his chest” in the face of danger and uncertainty and boasted that all the other disciples would fall—but not him (Matthew 26:33). However, this self-centered boast was short-lived as later, on the very night that Jesus was betrayed, Peter cursed and swore that he never even knew Him (Matthew 26:69-75). The soul-searching look that Jesus gave Peter after his denial caused him to weep bitter tears (Luke 22:61-62). He knew, like he had never known before, that he was nothing more than a Pretender and not a Defender of the faith. During the lonely times that Peter struggled with his sin and shortcomings, he had to have recalled Jesus’ words and his impulsive response as recorded in Luke 22:31-34:

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” But he said to Him, “Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!” And He said, “I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me” (emp. added).

The prayer of Jesus, coupled with Peter’s bitter tears and contrition, led him to become a stalwart Defender of the faith!

The road of “Pretender” to “Defender” of the faith is scattered with satanic IDD’s (Improvised Demonic Devices) planted by the devil to discourage, dissuade, and if necessary, dismember anyone and everyone who aspires to reach the spiritual goal of Defender of the faith. How can this treacherous journey be accomplished? Is it possible to reach this spiritual plane and glorify our Father in Heaven? Yes indeed! These guidelines, along with a surrendered heart and mind to Jesus, will help us safely reach the goal of Defender of the faith status:

Matthew 6:33ff Make Jesus PRIMARY in your life. Don’t make Him A#1 in your life; make Him your life!
Romans 1:16 Don’t ever be ashamed of the Gospel!
Colossians 3:2 Set your mind on things above!
2 Timothy 2:15 STUDY to show yourself approved unto God!
Hebrews 12:2 Fix your eyes on Jesus!
2 Peter 1:3-11 Commit to spiritual growth!
Revelation 2:10 Be faithful until death!

What do Judas, Ananias, Sapphira, Demas, Hymenaeus, Philetus, and Diotrephes have in common? They were Pretenders—they purported to stand for Jesus, righteousness, and godly commitment—but they didn’t! What about you? What about me? Let’s make it a point to examine our hearts and lives in light of God’s Word and make certain that we are Defenders of and for the faith. After all, in the Last Day, Jesus will only say “Well done” to those who have “Done well.”

May the words of Peter echo in our hearts, minds, and ministries now and to the day of eternity. See you on the Front Line!