

Hold Fast to Your Convictions

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isaiah 40:8).

These are days when people are so given to change. Really, it is the spirit of the age, and the American political system serves as a prime example. Polls are taken daily, and one day a president or candidate is up and then the next day he is down. The winds of economy, the winds of war, and the winds of philosophy carry people this way and that way.

Even among Christians, we see the effects of changing convictions. Electronic ministries now beam their messages all across the nation and the world. Though many are good, some promote detached forms of Christianity with watered-down opinions about the Word of God, fellowship, and evangelism.

This preacher maintains an old-fashioned commitment to the Book of books, the Bible.

Furthermore, this preacher is not going to start selling the convictions God established in his heart many, many years ago.

For example, I have a conviction about evangelism. Soul winning still works in our cities and counties, in the nations and across continents. That is my conviction, and it is not something I will let go. I still believe in world missions. I still believe that local assemblies are God's way and that believers should assemble themselves together more and more as our days grow shorter (Hebrews 10:25).

In this booklet, I will communicate the value of having convictions that are based on the Word of God. My prayer is that these words encourage every believer to stand fast on the Truth and to cling to the convictions God has given us through His Word and His provision.

Chapter One

PERMANENT PREMISES

A “premise” is defined as the foundation upon which every related thought in a category stands. Having the proper premise from God is crucial for anyone who communicates the Word of God. A communicator should always consider God’s premise, even though his presuppositions and conclusions may complement that premise in different ways through various messages. That is how believers grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

On the other side, problems arise for careless listeners who hear only the premise of a message and then think, “Oh, I’ve heard that before.” Of course they have heard the premise. But through the Holy Spirit, instead of generalizations, the preacher will continue with fresh presuppositions and applications of the premise that will lead the hearers into spiritual light, life, and love in very practical and specific areas.

There may be diverse conclusions of a message even though they are based upon a similar premise. For example, forgiveness ultimately has to be based upon a love that forgets, but forgiveness is not necessarily always based upon forgetfulness in the reality of human reference.

We all have to face reality. For example, the Finished Work will not hide what has not been repented of. There is accountability. Yes, I mentally forgive and forget someone the moment I hear that he has sinned against me. But if the person I forgive does not repent and deal with the issue at work in his life, he will enter into denial and hardness of his heart. Though I may not be able to fellowship with that person, my part is to forgive and forget and give it over to God.

It is so important for us to help damaged souls to heal. We have heard and read the numerous accounts of molestation involving children. These victims have carried wounds for years and, in some cases, decades, while the sex offenders were shielded and very often moved to new places where they committed new crimes.

This level of denial has proved disastrous. There was no accountability in the realm of reality; therefore, the offence was repeated again

and again.

Overcoming Repressions and Suppressions

What is involved in these cases is repression and suppression. Repression represents the unconscious act of forgetting something but without Christ motivating through divine forgiveness. Suppression is the conscious act of turning one's eyes away from events or circumstances that are troubling but without looking to Christ. It is like holding something under the surface, the way a child might sit atop a beach ball and try to hold it under water. The ball cannot be seen, but it takes an enormous amount of energy to hold it down. Eventually, the ball will pop up to the surface, the same way problems will surface after a person grows weary of suppressing them. This resurfacing often occurs without warning.

Through purpose, passion, and strength in the truth, the Word of God is able to deliver us from the issues we have repressed and suppressed in our lives. Many Finished Work Christians really need to have certain areas dealt with in their lives. Whether or not they are guilty of doing something bad, there are issues that need to be resolved, and they need to be resolved in

God's order. This simply involves bringing the problem to God and perhaps to a counselor, if one is needed.

Hiding the past—even under the “Finished Work”—is denial; it is not resolution. There is nothing wrong with pouring your heart out to God and to a godly counselor. All of us have hurtful memories that need to be emptied out of our unconscious minds. When events that caused negative results are brought out in the right place and with the right counselor, then you are on your way to resolving them through Christ and the Cross.

Attempting to forget your personal history is the same as trying to forget yourself. I am not implying that we should live in the memory of our past, but we have a need to resolve those issues honorably by submitting our hearts to God. If necessary, we may speak confidentially with a counselor that we can trust and feel free to tell him anything that needs resolution. In turn, a godly counselor should point us to what Christ has done for us.

Chapter Two

GUARDING OUR INHERITANCE

“And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.

“And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

“And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

“And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread” (1 Kings

21:1-4).

Ahab's Complaint

Ahab could not get what he wanted, so he went home with a heavy heart, whining to Jezebel, like a baby.

“Jezebel, I tried to get that vineyard that I told you about, but Naboth won’t sell it. I told him I’d give him a better vineyard; I told him I would give him more money than the property is worth. But he won’t budge!”

Jezebel answered Ahab by saying, “Well, just leave everything to me. I will get some of my thugs and we will just get rid of Naboth, if you know what I mean. I am in power, you are in power. We can do it and get away with it.”

That is just what Jezebel did, as the Bible describes it, in 1 Kings 21:12-15:

“They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.

“And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

“Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

“And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead” (1 Kings 21:12-15).

Stand Fast to the End

The thing I want to focus on in this story is Naboth’s stand. He refused to sell his inheritance. He refused to give up what he had received as his possession through his family. This vineyard most likely had passed from Naboth’s great-great-grandfather to his great-grandfather, to his grandfather, to his father, and then from his father to him.

“The vineyard is not for sale because my father gave it to me,” Naboth said. He had a conviction about it, and he would not move from that conviction. That stand cost him his life in the midst of evil people.

As children of God, we have a great inheritance.

“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of

Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

Satan wants Christians to sell out the convictions which God has passed to them through the Word in the power of the Spirit. Many things the devil would like to take from us. And whether he takes it from us or convinces us to sell out to him, it is all robbery.

We must learn to stand and say, "You cannot have these things—they are from my Father, and they are not for sale."

Compromises and Curses

"Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.

"Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

"Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.

"Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen.

“Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.

“Cursed be he that lieth with his father’s wife; because he uncovereth his father’s skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen.

“Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen.

“Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

“Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law. And all the people shall say, Amen.

“Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. And all the people shall say, Amen.

“Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen.

“Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen” (Deuteronomy 27:15-26).

These are convictions God communicated to Israel. Israel later sold out those convictions for the false gods they found in the Promised Land. As a result, they ended up losing their land, and they were carried away to captivity and bondage.

God gives us certain convictions, and we must hold fast to them. If we do not, then we will find ourselves in bondage.

This is what Satan does:

He says, "I want you to compromise on some things you believe about the Bible. You believe the Bible is inspired from Genesis to Revelation—that every word of it is inspired. I will reward you if you will turn away your faith from that stand and honor my opinion."

In those situations, we need to say, "The truth is not for sale, Satan. God the Father gave it to me through the Son and through the Holy Spirit, and you cannot have what God has given to me."

For example, someone might come to me and say, "I do not think your teaching on confrontational evangelism is correct. I consider it an invasion of people's privacy."

My answer to them is: "That is my conviction, based on the specific command of Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15, and it is not for sale."

Nearly fifty years ago, I believed in confrontational evangelism and I believe in it today. No one can buy that from me. It is not for sale. You can convert to some weak, wimpy form of

evangelism if you want to. Maybe you are afraid to confront someone. But Jesus always confronted people. He confronted the woman at the well in a very creative way. He confronted Nicodemus in John 3. He confronted the Pharisees in Matthew 23. He confronted each person He saw. You are not going to take confrontational evangelism from our church. Our Father gave it to us just as He gave it to the Son, and we are not selling.

Someone will come and say that we should stop teaching eternal security because some people may use that doctrine to live in sin. Well, the Father has given us this doctrine, and we will not sell it, no matter what.

We just happen to believe that the Father will be faithful to keep what He starts in us (see Philippians 1:6). We believe that once we are saved, no one is able to pluck us out of the Father's hand (see John 10:29). We hold fast to the conviction that God will perfect what concerns us (see Psalm 138:8). God the Father gave us eternal security, and we will not sell this doctrine.

Chapter Three

STANDING FIRM AS GOD'S DISCIPLES

“Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set” (Proverbs 22:28).

Years ago, God said, “I am going to give you a ministry where each person—spirit, soul, and body—can function practically in the Body of Jesus Christ. Once I have established this, then I want you to start soul-winning.”

Now, I started soul-winning more than four decades ago and I still go soul winning. I won't sell that conviction. I won't trade it in for a streamlined, air-conditioned Christianity that ignores the reality of hell.

The lost need to be saved or they will go to hell. Souls need to be won to Christ. You won't ever talk me into stopping soul winning. I will continue to preach the Gospel and set up different programs to reach more people. Furthermore, every program will be dedicated to this

conviction. Soul winning is something I will not sell out.

Soul winning in my life is not for sale—period. And it never will be.

Teach All Nations

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy [Spirit]:

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Discipleship is another truth that is not for sale. We always write down the names of those souls we have won, and we visit them until they tell us not to come back. God tells us to teach and make disciples of people from all nations.

What if the people don't want to be disciples? It doesn't matter. I am not selling my conviction on discipleship.

Every summer we have dozens of students and teen-agers who participate in Summer Harvest missions programs. They go overseas and

develop a desire for world missions. Why? They have convictions about growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is a calling on their lives.

“And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s,

“But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

“But many that are first shall be last; and the last first” (Mark 10:29-31).

Some of our international missionaries leave their families for months at a time in honor of their convictions to seek and save the lost in the uttermost parts of the earth.

I have had some well-meaning folks tell me that this is wrong. They take me aside and ask what will become of these men’s families. I have watched them, and those families are as healthy as can be. These pastors are doing a great job as husbands and fathers. And, they are doing amazing works for God in the power of the Spirit.

These are men who hold fast to their convic-

tions on the Great Commission.

We certainly believe in taking care of our families. Perhaps you do not think that these men should go around the world preaching the Gospel. Why don't you go ask the people in those faraway countries what they think? How about considering the mothers and fathers and children in the villages and towns across Africa, Asia, South America, and Europe? My guess is that these people would say, "Thank you, thank you. Thank you for holding to your convictions about the Great Commission."

There are people who cannot understand why we keep going into the inner city of Baltimore. We have been here for more than fifteen years and we have knocked on every door in town. Now, we are hitting all those doors again. Perhaps you think this is unnecessary, that it is an invasion of people's rights.

My conviction is this: People have a right to hear the Gospel. They can turn us away or they can receive us. Either way, my conviction on evangelism in my Jerusalem is not for sale.

The Word and the Church are Still for Today

Let me tell you something. This old Bible is still what I stand on. The precious Word of God

governs my life. Nothing can replace the local assembly with its godly pastor-teacher as the place where I can grow. These are convictions I will not sell.

Sure, there is a lot of excitement about the electronic church. Through television and the internet, preachers get the Gospel out to people. Still, no program can replace a good, old-fashioned, homespun, Bible-believing, God-honoring, Satan-hating ministry. It doesn't matter to me how much they stir up people's emotions and how much excitement they create. In my mind, these ministries just will never replace the local assembly.

I will hold fast to what the Father has given me. The Book is not for sale. The Church is not for sale. Evangelism is not for sale. None of these convictions in my heart are for sale. Long after the last critic is gone, these convictions will remain.

CONCLUSION

The Father gave me these convictions. My heavenly Father gave me purity of vision. My Father gave me the doctrine of eternal security. God the Father gave it to me. My Father taught me grace as the policy of guiding my life into victory. My Father gave me the great commandment to love everyone unconditionally. My Father gave me the Great Commission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel.

We are not selling any of it. We are not going to stop doing what we have been doing for the past five decades. Our church is not going to change these convictions next month, next year, or next decade. We have been at this too long. Why would we ever consider selling out now?

Satan, you cannot have the vineyard my Father has given me. Kill me just as Ahab and Jezebel killed Naboth, but my vineyard and all the convictions that have been cultivated are not for sale. The Father gave these things to me and

I am going to hold fast to them. I will hold fast to every single one of them and never sell out the truth.