

December 26, 2021

The View

"Sirs, we wish to see Jesus." —John 12:21

Welcome Visitors & Returning College Students!

We always love to see visitors and for the next month or so, we'll get to be with our college students who are home for the holidays. As a reminder, our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The six elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate located near the entrance.
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

Schedule

The Lord's Day

9:30 AM Bible classes for all ages

Auditorium: A Study of Paul's Letter to the Philippians

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today

David Posey: Jesus on Love

Livestream at 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>

Bible Class @ 1:30 PM in room 15/16 Hebrews

Bible Class @ 5 PM — A Study of Prayer (Auditorium)

Young People's Class, 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey's home

Middle school class: monthly (contact Dan Stegall at 818- 209-9810)

There are several on-going Bible classes in the homes of members. Check with David Posey or one of the other elders if you would like to join one of those classes.

Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Bible classes for all ages

Auditorium: A Study of Paul's Letter to the Philippians

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Sometimes the Slopes Are Slippery

I have a storehouse of experiences with fellow members of churches of Christ — almost all of them good, some of them not so good. The not-so-good memories tend to stand out, unfortunately. But I try to use them to get better, to not fall into the same trap that some of our brethren have fallen into.

One of those traps is that some man or woman believes they have arrived at a higher level of “spirituality” and have a more enlightened view of the Scriptures than others. They readily criticize interpretation of the Bible that they consider “old school” and readily mark it up to tradition.

Now, it’s true that there are some brethren who have elevated some traditions and given them the force of law. That practice should be called out. But some brethren don’t stop there. They arrogantly judge others and almost always become, in the name of “grace,” more “open-minded” when it comes to morality and what a church should do in an assembly. And many of them become visibly impatient with brethren who disagree with their views.

One manifestation of this attitude is their mockery of the “slippery slope” argument. This is the argument that if you practice A, though not a sin in itself, it may lead to the practice of Z, a sin. For example, one might argue that even if you grant that smoking a cigarette on occasion is not a sin, the practice of smoking at all, given its nature, could lead to addiction to nicotine at some point (which could be sin). So, why smoke at all?

It’s true that using the slippery slope argument in some cases is a really bad idea. For example, it’s a mistake to use it in place of dealing with the issue itself. Even in the example above, it would be better to deal with the issue of smoking itself. If it’s a sin, what makes it a sin? And there is no reason to resort to the slippery slope argument when debating LGBTQ+ issues, including same-sex marriage. The Bible is clear that marriage is only lawful between a male and female.

There is no need to make ridiculous statements such as “*if the courts approve same sex marriage, the next thing you know, people will be marrying their parakeets.*” That’s no argument at all and makes the person who said it seem incredibly unserious.

Slippery slope arguments were abused by preachers in the past, and undoubtedly still are. Examples from my youth: “*Don’t ever play card games because cards are used in gambling.*” “*Don’t ever play billiards because bad things happen in pool halls*” and “laws” such as those. These are applications in search of a text, and finding none, the slippery slope becomes law.

Misuse of the argument doesn’t mean it is invalid, though. Douglas Watson, PhD, is one of the leading authorities on informal logic. He has written an entire book entitled, *Slippery Slope Arguments*, published by Oxford University Press. In it, he argues that slippery slope arguments

can be used correctly in some cases as a reasonable type of argument to shift a burden of proof in a critical discussion.

God used the slippery slope argument on several occasions. For example, God warned the people of Israel against “multiplying horses” (Deuteronomy 17). Why? Because trust in your number of horses could lead to less dependence on God. Similar commands in the Old Testament were designed to keep Israel from putting themselves into a situation that may lead to sin or harm to others. But, history proves that Israel regularly ignored those warnings and slipped down the slope!

In the New Testament, we find examples of this as well. Jesus seems to appeal to a form of the slippery slope argument in the Sermon on the Mount when he warns His disciples about the dangers of anger (Matthew 5:21ff), looking at women (Matthew 5:27f) and of making oaths (Matthew 5:33ff). Don’t even get on the slope because it can lead to some dreadful sins.

Parents often use the slippery slope argument, and they should. “*A can lead to B can lead to C...*” is a common means of teaching our children. Isn’t that the point behind “be home before dark,” and behind every curfew we impose on our kids? It’s not about the time, itself, but what staying out late can lead to.

The slippery slope argument is not a catch-all and it is a faulty approach in some situations. But it also can function as a warning from someone who is wise and experienced. “If go to that place, you might end up in a place you didn’t intend to go.” “Unintended consequences” is a term we use to describe the unfortunate results of bad decisions. Wise people will listen to such advice.

There is nothing wrong with teaching your children about the dangers of alcohol, for example, and advising them to avoid it altogether because of what it might lead to. Many of the Proverbs use that approach: “*Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly*” (Proverbs 23:31). The same can be said of choosing companions (I Corinthians 15:33) or frequenting certain establishments or attending a certain school or university.

Our common experience tells us that there are consequences for our choices, some good, some bad. If we can avoid — and help our children avoid — bad consequences by warning them of possible dangers, then what difference does it make what we call those warnings?

The “slippery slope” is a helpful analogy and a worthwhile form of argument when used correctly. Don’t let elitist brethren or others bully you into thinking otherwise. Be suspicious; they probably have their own ax to grind.

The Power of Simplicity

By Bill Hall

Jesus Christ had a deep appreciation for simple things. His teaching was profound, but always simple. He reached the hearts of His hearers, not with high-sounding philosophical jargon, but with illustrations and “to the point” teaching. He could see in a farmer sowing his seed, or a lily showing forth its beauty, or a shepherd leaving his flock to seek one lost sheep, or a loving father welcoming a wayward son, a lesson that could teach some spiritual truth.

His apostles were chosen from the humble class. He could appreciate people, not for what they possessed, but for what they were; and, in some cases, not for what they were, but for what they could become. He recognized true quality, and true quality is often found in the simple and humble.

The worship He ordained was simple in nature. “*Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul... spoke to them...*” (Acts 20:7). Even the poorest could worship, for all that was required of a material nature was a little bread and fruit of the vine. Those of little talent could worship, for God was listening in view of the heart rather than the beauty of the voice.

He authorized a simple organization for His church, with each

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congregation appointing its own bishops and deacons (Philippians 1:1). There were no denominational associations, conferences, or synods. There were no inter-church organizations or societies. Yet, through the simple organization given the church by the Lord, the world of the first century was thoroughly evangelized and the needy among them provided for. The Lord knew that success in His work would not be brought about through complexity of organization, but through dedication, faith, and commitment on the part of His followers. We make a terrible mistake when we try to substitute the former for the latter.

Why this simplicity? “*That no flesh should glory in His presence*” (1 Corinthians 1:29). The complex systems which men devise tend to bring glory to themselves rather than to God.

To return to the simplicity which our Lord ordained might not be impressive to the worldly-minded, but, then, Jesus Himself is not very impressive to the worldly-minded. Besides, our purpose is not to impress the worldly-minded, but to please God and bow in submission to His will. Let us do away with our super projects and complex systems. Let us learn to appreciate simple teaching and simple ways. Above all, let us learn to appreciate Bible teaching and Bible ways.

Someone has said: “How foolish we are to think that God will be impressed with our voices when we sing; after all, He hears the angels sing! How foolish to think He will be impressed with our cathedrals; remember, He made the Grand Canyon!” What He is seeking for is a heart that is pure, loving, and obedient to His will. And that’s simple. —*Via, Cy-Fair church of Christ newsletter*

David and the Showbread

By Greg Gwin

There are often questions raised about the incident where Jesus’ disciples were chastised by the Pharisees for gathering corn on the Sabbath. The account goes like this:

“At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pick the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? ... if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.”

—Matthew 12:1-7, KJV

There are many, including some well-known Bible commentators, who attempt to use this passage to teach “situation ethics.” It is their view that under extreme circumstances it is allowable to set aside the specific commands of God. However, it is a misapplication to use this text in such a way. Note:

1) The action of the disciples was lawful. It was not stealing (Deuteronomy 23:25) and it was not a type of work that was forbidden on the Sabbath day (Exodus 20:8-11). In fact, it should be observed that Jesus specifically said they were “guiltless” (vs. 7).

2) David’s actions in the matter of the showbread were sinful. Jesus said that he did that which was “*not lawful*” (vs. 4). A careful reading of 1 Samuel 21-22 shows that David also lied in that episode and later repented of his sinful conduct.

With these truths clearly understood, then the question remains: Why did Jesus even mention David and the showbread? The reason is this: The Jews loved and honored the memory of David. They would never criticize his actions. Jesus was pointing out their inconsistency. They justified David in an obvious and blatant sin, and they condemned His disciples for doing something that was not a sin at all.

Clearly, this text cannot be used to defend “situation ethics.”

—*Via, Cy-Fair church of Christ newsletter*