

The Non-Sensical Things We Say (and Believe), Part 2

In a previous article similarly titled, we highlighted, surprisingly enough, some non-sensical but commonly uttered phrases such as “hot water heater” and “I found it in the *last* place I looked.” But we also extrapolated our consideration of ill-logical phraseology to spiritual dialog as well- such as, “It doesn’t matter what you believe as long as you’re honest and sincere,” and “We’re all just taking different roads to the same place,” and “We just understand that passage/verse differently,” and finally, “Once we’re saved, we can never be lost.” In each case, we used the Bible to show how these expressions are non-sensical, unscriptural, and utterly false. Upon further reflection, there are a few more popular “spiritual” (to use the term loosely) catchphrases that need to be added to our list for consideration (and expulsion!)....

“What this means to me.” This phrase often precedes a well-meant effort to explain a biblical passage or verse in a class or discussion, but it is just wrong to the core. As is, “I understand this to mean....” and all related variations. Read carefully the following verses, *“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God,”* 2Peter 1:20-21. The truth of God’s Word is **NOT** relative to your, my, or anyone else’s “interpretation” or “understanding”- it is **true** whether we understand it or not. None of us has the right to “interpret” truth relative to our own biases, prejudices, and limitations. It is not “my personal truth”- nor is it yours. If we arrive at the proper understanding of a verse or passage, it means the same thing “to/for me” that it does to/for everyone, for the gospel *“is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,”* Romans 1:16.

“Just follow your heart.” This sounds good and pleasing- probably because it makes you the standard of what is right and wrong. You’re not. Neither am I. Again, note what the Bible actually says on this matter. *“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders,”* Matthew 15:19. Someone retorts, “But my heart is pure, honest, and good.” Great! If that it is true, then it is a heart shaped by and following the Word of God. But many of us who claim to have a “good heart” do so despite living blatantly sinful lives. Please take time to read 1John 3 where the common myth of “having a good heart” despite living a sin-filled life is debunked. Here’s just a snippet to make the point, *“Little children, let no one deceive you, the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; but the one who practices sin is of the devil,”* 1John 3:7-8. Our hearts are simply neither the standard by which right and wrong is determined, nor the one by which we will be judged, John 12:48; 2Corinthians 5:10.

“I have to do what is right for me.” There are a couple of issues with this otherwise assuring nod-worthy statement. Firstly, as has been pointed out above, what is “right for me” is “right for everyone” spiritually. “Right” and “wrong” are not personal to “me” or “you,” because God *“is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him,”* Acts 10:34-35. Secondly, and I could be wrong about this part, but “I have to do what is right for me” is often not so much about doing what is “right” as it about “for me.” We live in a “me first” selfish society where “my” needs, wants, and desires are thought to be “right” just because they are “mine.” In Philippians 3:18-19, worshipping the god of “me” is shown to be idolatry, *“For many walk, of whom I have often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their mind on earthly things.”* The real “right for me” way is clearly shown in Philippians 2:1-4ff. Please read it.

If you’re following closely, you’ve likely noticed a common thread in the above statements: they’re all about “me”- *my* thoughts, *my* heart, and *my* interests. But *my* thoughts are not God’s, Isaiah 55:8-9; *my* heart is not His standard, John 8:47; and *my* interests do not determine His “right,” 1Peter 3:17; and the same is true for *you*. Please: read these passages; think on these things; and allow God’s Word to be the only standard in your life! (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)