

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

June 9

2024

God Forgives, I Don't

Bumper stickers. Some bring a smile, some a chuckle. Some bring a frown, and others a wag of the head. Once in a while though, some are upsetting; very upsetting. This past week I saw one that made me do a double take. I couldn't believe the brash attitude it portrayed. Boldly situated on the back window of a pick-up truck, the sticker read, "God forgives. I Don't."

No doubt, the owner was proud of his or her sticker. Its message most likely made a statement that fit his or her personality. That message, as I interpreted it, was, don't mess with me-I get even. What a bold and arrogant attitude to have. But more than that, what an irreverent, blasphemous way of stating it.

What the owner of that sticker fails to realize is that with such an attitude, he or she cannot find true happiness or peace of mind when one stores up bitter feelings and cultivates arrogant pride, it festers and eats at that person till he or she is consumed and utterly miserable.

Knowing the potential for men to hold grudges and the damaging effects of it, God warns, "*You shall not take*

vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord" (Leviticus 18:19). Again in James 5:9 He states, "*Do not grumble against (grudge) one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold the Judge is standing at the door!*" Instead of holding grudges and seeking to get even, God desires that we "*Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord*" (Romans 12:17-19).

Another sad reality is that when one fails to forgive, he or she cannot be forgiven. Jesus made this clear when He said, "*For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*" (Matthew 6:14, 15). Many, including the sticker owner, may not be concerned now with being forgiven by God, but there will come a time when they will earnestly covet His mercy (2 Thessalonians 1:7, 9). The problem is, then it will be too late.

Brethren, though we may not display our unforgiving attitude with a bumper sticker, often it is just as evident. And as surely as it will keep the sticker owner and others from being happy and being forgiven by God, so it will have the same damaging effect on us.

Let us, therefore, examine ourselves and guard against this destructive attitude. And as God desires, let us "*be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you*" (Ephesians 4:32).

✍ Ken McDaniel

You Can Never Fool God

I heard someone once say, “You can fool all of the people some of the time. You can fool some of the people all the time, but you can not fool all of the people all of the time, and you can never fool God.”

How true, right. You see, to fool someone is to make them believe something that is not true, and man has always tried to get away with fooling his fellow man. For instance, Joseph’s brothers fooled their dad concerning the disappearance of their brother (Genesis 37: 28, 31-32) and they had him to believe that Joseph was dead (Genesis 37:33-35).

Now, not only do men sometimes seek to fool their fellow man, but they also sometimes even attempt to fool God. For instance, Ananias and Sapphira attempted such (Acts 5:1-4). However, how did that work out for them? (Read: Acts 5:5-10)

You see, the fact of the matter is, although one may be able to sometimes fool some, one will never be able to fool God. For, the all seeing eye of God sees our every move (Proverbs 15:3; Hebrews 4:13). Think about that, and never forget, God knows all about us (Psalm 69:5, 139:1-4; 1 John 3:20), and He is not, and will not, be mocked (Galatians 6:7-8).

So, although you may try, and sometimes be able to fool others by painting them a better image of yourself than who you truly are, know that you can never fool God (1 Samuel 16:7). Therefore, do not be deceived and think that you can ever fool God, and never forget, “you can pull the wool over some peoples eyes, but you can never pull the wool over God’s eyes” (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

✍ Brad Phillips

God’s Plan of Salvation

Hear the word of God. (Romans 10:17)

Believe in Jesus Christ. (John 8:24)

Repent of your sins. (Acts 17:30)

Confess Jesus Christ. (Romans 10:9-10)

Be baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38)

Remain faithful unto death. (Revelation 2:10)

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

Belleville church of Christ

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www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

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