

CHURCH BASHING DIVISIONS

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"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." I Cor. 1: 10.

The above is an amazing and heart rending verse. Paul both begs and warns the church to avoid dishonoring Christ by allowing divisions, friction, arguments, and even opinions to hinder the church in its ministry. He urges church members to be joined as one, to think as one and to judge with righteous judgments. This in itself is a full time job for every believer who cares for his church. I guess because we are all human there will always be those who want to run things; perhaps after years of improper family control. There are "oldsters" who fear they will lose their grip and "youngsters" who are sure they can do better. Paul lamented such when he said "I brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men" I Cor. 3:1-3. Today's churches are full of gossip, contentions, hurt feelings, jealousy, bitterness and all forms of rancor. It is frightening how vicious some members become over the smallest matter. Their pride is wounded, their plans are thwarted and like spoiled brats they scream for their way. The resulting warfare splits churches, wrecks the lives of the combatants and destroys the testimony of the church in the community.

One thing is proven by time and is perfectly clear. The church of Jesus Christ cannot be destroyed by the **EVIL OUTSIDE SINNING CROWD**. In Matthew 16:18 Christ said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". The booze, pornography, rock, drug, immoral crowd will always be against the church. Even the courts of law will be powerless to destroy the

church although they will try. Christ gave Himself for the church and He is not about to allow outside forces to destroy the work of His hands. The destruction comes from within as the church shoots itself in its own foot. The Corinthian church is Bible proof of this fact. It did not survive. The church of Ephesus is mentioned in Revelation along with several others, but not the church of Corinth. Today a tour guide will show you where it was but it ceased to exist. It fell from within and that is the fate of all fallen churches. The church stands secure against all the winds of change and opposition from without but can self destruct from within.

Often the disease manifests itself among the **GOSSIPING WOMEN IN THE CHURCH**. I suppose this will bring me under some "flak", but God has never given authority to women members to govern the spiritual decisions of the church. He clearly instructs the women "to learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence" I Tim. 2:11-12. The old saying, "Telegraph, telephone, tell-a-woman" may not sound kind but it is often true. Women have the time to sit and assassinate the preacher over the phone. They can blow the fires of hurt and rebellion to a raging inferno. Their character assassinating ability has long been heard in disrupted business meetings of the church. If your veins are filled with ERA blood you better beware for you will soon oppose the man of God. I realize men can do the same but it is usually the women who nourish the hurt feelings, pass along the gossip and tongue lash their husbands into their way of thinking. How very sad it is for they drain the very life's blood of their church. The church has many places a woman can serve but never bossing the man, questioning his God given authority at the expense of the congregation.

Often, cautious division and uncertainty comes from **ASPIRING CHURCH LEADERSHIP**. No one should look longingly at the job of the pastor with jealous desire to attain the same. Oh, it will not happen all at once and they will not shout it from the housetop, but little by little drop phrases which make themselves look good. If they started

by saying, "the pastor is rotten and we need to throw him out" everyone would see their lustful designs. The church would immediately throw them out! They will rather use a skillful path as is revealed in Jude 16. It calls them "murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." This can happen to school principals, youth pastors, deacons, trustees, Sunday School Superintendents, heavy supporters and charter members. When anyone within the church starts courting favor, suggesting they know better or could do better, division begins to rear its ugly head. Church workers should never look longingly on the job and responsibilities of another. Beware those who say, "the pastor is a good man, but",... "Let me help you for I can handle it better",... "Some of the people are saying"..... Make a note to read II Samuel 15 soon. Read how pretty boy Absalom, the winsome smooth talking son of David built his following. He stole the hearts of those who came to King David for counseling. He spent many years undermining his own father. When the time was ripe, he blew his own horn loudly and the deceived multitude followed blindly. You can hear someone's horn tooting very often as they seek to lead the flock to their own advantage. Shame, shame, that anyone could get so blind as to destroy their own church.

Much shame indeed on the **DECEIVED MAJORITY**. God never gave any church member the authority to correct the pastor. I am not talking about doctrinal error or moral error but the critical questioning of his authority. When you stop listening to your pastor the devil will send someone to take over your allegiance. Beware those who make long phone calls or circle the wagons and do vocal combat in the parking lot. Be warned of those who call meetings behind the back of the pastor and draw members to themselves. They will show mock concern, sow seeds of doubt and shroud with mystery their actions. They won't call the pastor a skunk or you would quickly spot them. They will promise the moon, languish for the old days and make great offers to help. If your dear pastor stands for the Bible, wins souls to Christ, evidences a burden for the souls of men and

preaches with spirit filled fervor, you just stick with him. Hang up the phone when anyone talks unkindly. Inform him of sneak developments and be strong in loyalty to your pastor. Beware the Judas goat! Old stockyards used a goat who would get in with the sheep and lead them into the final line for slaughter. At the last minute a small gate would let it escape while the blind following sheep would go to their doom. Jesus spoke of Judas and how he "sought how to conveniently betray him" Mark 14:11. Beware lest someone in your church be at work in undercover sabotage. Don't be misled to hurt your church and your family. The church must be kept for our future generation.

Sadly, there are **REBELLIOUS TEENS** who add to the demise of their church. They are often the result of foolish combative parents that have killed their respect for church and the man of God. I find the hardest teens are those that have been moved through several churches because their parents fought and left churches repeatedly. Such selfish, rebellious example on the part of their parents causes great hardness and loose living. Infected by the bad example of their parents and the peer pressure of worldly friends they slump in rebellion. Their immaturity shows as they sit near the back in service with evident indifference. They talk together, disturb the service, dampen the spirit and rebel against church standards. Their goals are worldly, their dedication spotty and surrender to the will of God nearly unknown. If you are a youth reading this you must shape up, surrender to the will of God and realize it is your church you are hurting. Don't let past scars and bad adult example keep you from doing your best. Remember I Timothy 4:12 urges "let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Cherish your church and enter with joy and honesty into its ministry. Thrill your pastor with your dedication and do your part to keep your church true to Christ.

In conclusion, be on the lookout for inner trouble. Remember not to be one that blindly follows a Judas. Don't give an ear to any talk against your pastor. Close your ears to grumbling, hurt feelings and tactics of division. Refuse to be a part of

anything that is carried out behind your pastors back. Don't be attracted or diverted from faithful service to your church. Follow your leader, accept his discipline and obey his preaching. Your church is more important than anything on earth. Love it, serve it, stay with it and guard it from evil. Remember Psalms 119:165 promises "Great peace have they that love thy law and nothing shall offend them." Nothing will offend you if you keep in right relationship with the Lord. Saturate yourself in the word and obey His commands. His desire is for your church to be "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" Eph. 5:27.