

DARE TO BE DIFFERENT! ... Stop Following the Crowd!

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What people say or think about me used to be so important to me. It was more of an approval addiction. As one gets along in numerical age, one also gathers experiences that become a road map for how to live later in life. Some never learn from their mistakes and so miss the essence of life. I saw this women's T-Shirt on the internet recently and it had this advertisement on it; most comfortable t-Shirt ever, 100% cotton, pre-shrunk and guaranteed standard fit. The sign on the front showed six blue fish of different sizes going in the same direction and a big red one going in the opposite direction with a sign saying, 'Dare to be different.' Manufacturers the world over make tons of money from the gullibility of women – the next dress style, hair product or the current acceptable lifestyle.

Being alone in what one believes or being the dissenting voice on an issue can often draw a lot of criticism from other people who do not share one's views. Take the case of king David in the book of 1 Samuel 24, most people will think that David was cowardly when he refused to kill king Saul when he had the opportunity in the desert of Engedi. No law on earth could have condemned David at that point for killing Saul – this would pass for the best case of self defense according to human law. David, however, shunned all the criticisms and chose to be accountable to God by not touching His anointed. David did not live by the laws of an era, a culture or kingdom. How many times have people ganged up to raise false accusations against another person or present only half truths knowing fully well how it will hurt the individual. Some will choose to keep quiet even when they know the facts because they are afraid of the majority. The Bible says let your yes be yes, and your no be no. Psalm 15:1-3, states, "*Who may worship in your sanctuary, Lord? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts. Those who refuse to slander others or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends*"

The laws that were available in David's time were not the Sermon on the Mount, what he had was, 'an eye for an eye'. However, he had a deep knowledge of God which we all can have by walking with Him daily.

There is also the case of David and Absalom in the book of 2 Samuel Chapters 13 to 19. Absalom thought to himself that he wanted to be king and so he cunningly stole the hearts of the people. The people were swayed by him and they deserted David their real king to follow his

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son. In chapter 15:3, we hear Absalom say; 'I wish I were Judge' He then lied to the king that he needed to go to Heron to perform a sacrifice unto the Lord. His father gave him permission but when he got there he caused the trumpet to be sounded and declared himself king. In verse 12 of chapter 15, the Bible records that David's own officers joined him and 'soon many others also joined Absalom, and the conspiracy gained momentum.'

A messenger arrived to tell King David about his son's rebellion and he had to run away from his own Palace. He released Ittai the Gittite to go his own way but his reply was, ***"I vow by the Lord and by your own life that I will go wherever you go, no matter what happens, whether it means life or death."***

If we compare this to what Shimei, a member of Saul's family said to David in Chapter 16:7, we will see that people are ready to run with slander without ascertaining the truth. He called David a murderer saying, "The Lord is paying you back for murdering Saul and his family. You stole his throne, and now the Lord has given it to your son, Absalom. At last you will taste of your own medicine." David's reply to these insults and untruths was that if his own son could steal the kingdom from him, the door is open for other feeble minded ones to insult him. If God allowed it, then blessings would surely come from the incident. A true friend will not follow the crowd to condemn you.

The favorite belief is that women are easily swayed. The point of reference is usually Mother Eve in the book of Genesis. She was confronted by the serpent who twisted the word of God to suit his own purpose of deception. Hear his conversation with the woman in Genesis 3:1-3, "... Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?" "Of course we may eat it, it's only the fruit from the tree in the center of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it or even touch it or we will die." The serpent said, "You won't die! God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become like God, knowing everything, both good and evil."(NLT)

You must have a mind of your own!

Everyone must study the word of God to know what the mind of God concerning every situation is. What is revealed in His word now becomes your mind. Paul said in Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you which is the mind of Jesus..." Jesus is humble enough to fulfill His assignment even as painful as it was. I am sure that there would have been people who wanted to sway Him (not that they could). Remember that the devil came to test Him after He fasted for forty days and nights. He attempted to make Him renounce Himself and His mission by bowing to temptation. What are you facing in your own personal life that will cause you to make a decision to follow the crowd? Single parenting seems to be the in thing because women do not want to be bothered with men and vice versa. God ordained two parent households, male and female. It must not be the choice of anyone because it is now popular. Mother Eve was tempted by the devil, she did not stop to think. She looked at the fruit and it was good. She ate some of the fruit and also gave to her husband. You do not have to give up on your marriage because someone did it and she is getting a hefty child support check. God has a better plan for you.

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Finally, know that the wide and popular road leads to destruction, while the narrow and less popular road leads to heaven. Choose which way to go.

Happy New Year!

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