

Guilt or Conviction?

How The Devil Can Use Solid Preaching To Discourage Sincere Christians

*"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."
(Ephesians 6:16)*

Our enemy Is A Very Shewed Enemy

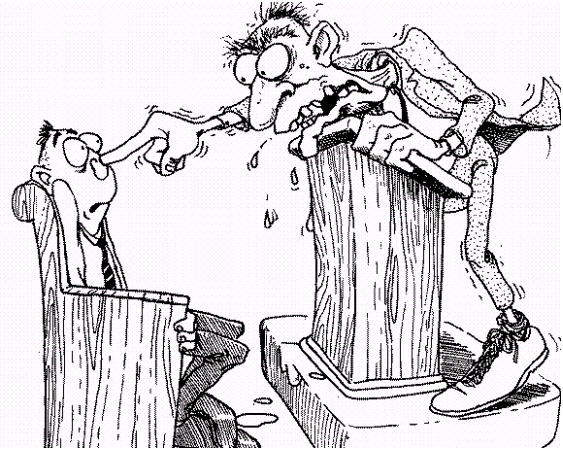
The word "...wiles" in the verse above is the same word from which we get our English word "...methods". It refers to craftiness and trickery. In Ephesians 4:14, it is translated "...lie in wait." It presents the idea of a hunter disguising himself in order to capture his prey.

Discouragement Is Satan's Greatest Tool Against Sincere Christians

If the Devil can get the pastor and the faithful members discouraged, he can destroy the effectiveness of any local church.

Satan Loves To Work In The Church

Ephesians 6:11 refers to, "...the wiles of the devil." It is speaking of his cunning methods. It is referring to something other than open and obvious warfare. It means Satan is using methods in a manner or in places where we least expect him to attack. Satan delights in working his "...wiles" when we are sitting in church. He loves to use people in the local church to discourage the pastor, and he also likes using the pastor to discourage the people. This is the last thing we want to do; however, it is where much of the discouragement originates in our local churches.



The Devil knows sincere Christians who are well grounded in the Word are not going to be tempted to look for their joy in the entertainment world. He; therefore, gets pastors and church members looking for their joy in the local church rather than in Christ. Those who look for their joy in the local church will soon become discouraged.

Only Jesus Can Satisfy Your Soul

The songwriter has written a beautiful song entitled, "Only Jesus Can Satisfy Your Soul."

"The world will try to satisfy that
longing in your soul
You may search the wide world over
but you'll be just as before.
You'll never find true satisfaction
until you've found the Lord
For only Jesus can satisfy your soul"

Another Verse Could Be Added

"The church will try to satisfy that
longing in your soul
You may search the whole church over
but you'll be just as before.
You'll never find true satisfaction
until you've found the Lord
For only Jesus can satisfy your soul.

How The Devil Uses Solid Preaching To Discourage Sincere Christians

Whenever a sincere Christian listens to a preacher preach the Word of God, two forces go to work. John 16:13 says the Holy Spirit will “...*guide you into all truth...*” First Peter 5:8 also says, “...*your adversary the devil,*” is “...*seeking whom he may devour.*”

Guilt or Conviction?

When we listen to a message the Holy Spirit will work with our spirit in the area of conviction. The Bible say the Holy Spirit bears witness with “...*our spirit.*” (Romans 8:16) This is a very import Bible truth to understand. The Holy Spirit does not communicate with our mind, will or emotions. He communicates with our spirit. John 16:13 says the Holy Spirit will “...*guide* (show us the right way) *you into all truth...*”

The Devil will work with our mind, will and emotions to put us on a guilt trip. When we listens to a message on prayer, Bible study, witnessing to lost people, or spending quality time with our families, the Devil will quickly work his wiles to send us on a guilt trip.

When the pastor preaches on wives submitting to their husbands, or husbands loving their wives as Christ loved the church, the Devil will make the listeners feel guilty if he can.

If a solid message is preached about serving the Lord, commitment, giving to missions or any other subject the Devil goes to work to see that the sincere Christian will leave the church feeling guilty and discouraged.

Guilt Trips or Conviction Trips?

Walking the aisle following a message, and praying about something the Holy Spirit has convicted a Christian about is a good thing to do. Walking the aisle and dealing with guilt is

not only a worthless thing to do it is a harmful thing to do.

Man Is A Three-part Being

Man has a body, a soul and a spirit. The soul consists of the mind, the will and the emotions. When a person goes forward on a guilt trip he is responding to the area of his mind, will and emotions. He is dealing with a “...*guilty conscience.*” The dictionary says the conscience is that area that deals with, “...*a feeling of obligation to do right or be good...*” Conscience is a good, God-given thing; however, we cannot trust the conscience to guide us unless it is under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit Conviction

The Holy Spirit does not deal with us so as to give us a “...*feeling of obligation to do right.*” He convicts us of the sin of offending our God, and moves us to repent and ask God to forgive us for our sin. Holy Spirit conviction does not deal with a person’s mind will or emotions. The Bible says in, Romans 8:16, “*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit...*”

How To Discern The Difference Between Guilt And Conviction

The Holy Spirit and the Word of God are always in complete agreement. If a Christian is convicted by the Spirit of God, he or she is convicted because someone “...*preached the Word,*” or they were reading “...*the Word.*”

I remember being in a church meeting where the preacher was doing a great job of putting people on a guilt trip. He was very dynamic and very persuasive in the art of dealing with *the mind, the will, and the emotions.* His subject was soul winning, however his message was not founded on the Word of God. He hollered, “*If you do not get one soul a week down the aisle of your church you are not right with God!!!*”

That was guilt trip material and he managed to get almost everyone in the meeting down the aisle, however, the Holy Spirit only works in harmony with the Word of God. He had no chapter and verse to support his nonsense.

Adoniram Judson arrived in Burma in 1813. Judson labored hard and faithfully. Five long years passed before Judson was able to baptize his first convert. Was He right not with God? Was Noah not right with God for 120 years?

A.W. Tozer said, *“However high the emotional content, no experience can be proved to be genuine unless we can find chapter and verse authority for it in the Scriptures.”*

If the preacher had said, *“If we do not make a genuine effort every day to witness for Christ we are not right with God,”* he would have preached something the Holy Spirit could be in harmony with.

Preaching that is not based on the Word of God is no different than a high-pressured sales pitch by a vacuum cleaner salesman. A good salesman has the ability to get others to do what he wants them to do. He has the ability to influence the mind, will and emotions of his listeners.

“Preach The Word”

The purpose of the preacher should be to preach the Word of God in a manner that gives the Holy Spirit the opportunity to bring the listeners to a place of conviction. There is a major difference between the Holy Spirit dealing with the spirit of a person, and a dynamic speaker dealing with the emotions of his listeners.

Paul said *“...I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech...my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in*

demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” (First Corinthians 2:1-5)

Emotion Is A Good Thing!

There are at least twenty verses in the Scripture that says, *“All the people shall say amen.”* Nehemiah 5:13 says, *“...all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD.”* God created everything including our emotions, however, emotions should be what salt is to a steak. If we put too much salt on the steak we will have misused the purpose of salt and done more harm than good.

Good Words And Fair Speeches

Romans 16:18 warns us against those who, *“...by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”* According to Strong's Concordance the term, “Fair Speeches” means, *“Language artfully adapted to captivate the hearer.”*

Colossians 2:4 very plainly warns us. *“...lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.”* (Strong's: “Speech adapted to persuade.) Second Peter 2:18 warns of false prophets who, *“...speak great swelling words...”* Jude 1:16 warns of those whose. *“...mouth speaketh great swelling words...”* The verses above are referring to false prophets leading people astray by their emotional preaching. It is not suggesting that emotion in a message is prohibited by Scripture.

The lack of all emotion in a service results in a dead service. Whenever the Holy Spirit is involved in preaching, there will be some emotion. The emotion should be a byproduct of the working of the Holy Spirit; however, there is a major difference between the emotion that is a result from the Holy Spirit moving in spirit of an individual and the emotion caused by the *“...great swelling words”* of a speaker who is using emotionalism as a tool to get people to respond.

God used Paul even though they said his speech was, "...contemptible." (Second Corinthians 10:10)

There is a major difference between Holy Spirit working in harmony with someone preaching the Word of God, and the emotionalism that can be manufactured in the mind, will and emotions by a poem and a few tear jerking illustrations from a talented speaker.

They Received The Word

The Bible says, "*For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*" (First Thessalonians 2:13) God commanded the prophet saying, "...and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." (Jeremiah 23:28)

Nehemiah's Intellectual Response

In the revival recorded in Nehemiah we see the people first had an intellectual response based on the Word of God. Nehemiah 8:1 says, "*And all the people...spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses...*"

- **Nehemiah 8:1** "...bring the book."
- **Nehemiah 8:3** "...attentive unto the book."
- **Nehemiah 8:5** "...Ezra opened the book."
- **Nehemiah 8:8** "...they read in the book."
- **Nehemiah 8:18** "...he read in the book."
- **Nehemiah 9:3** "...read in the book."
- **Nehemiah 12:12** "...written in the book."
- **Nehemiah 13:1** "...they read in the book."
- **Nehemiah 8:2** "...hear with understanding."
- **Nehemiah 10:28** "...having understanding."
- **Nehemiah 8:3** "...those that could understand."
- **Nehemiah 8:8** "... caused them to understand."
- **Nehemiah 8:7** "...the people to understand."
- **Nehemiah 8:12** "...understood the words."
- **Nehemiah 8:13** "... understand the words of the law."

Nehemiah's Emotional Response

Following their intellectual response to the preaching of the Word of God, there was an emotional response. Nehemiah 8:9 "*...the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.*" Verse six says, "*And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.*"

The Word of God is designed to stimulate our emotions.

- **Warning** bears fruit in the emotion of fear. (Hebrews 10:25-27)
- **Rebuke** bears fruit in sorrow. (Second Corinthians 7:8)
- **Knowledge** bears fruit in in the emotion of hating certain things. (Proverbs1:7)
- **Love** bears fruit in in obedience. (John 14:15)
- **Hope** bears fruit in patience. (Romans 8:24-25)
- **Joy** bears fruit in sacrifice. (Second Corinthians 8:2-5)
- **Sorrow** bears fruit in repentance. (2 Corinthians 7:10)

God's Purpose For Emotions Is Much More Than Having A Warm Fuzzy Feeling

"For feelings come and feelings go
And feelings are deceiving;
My warrant is the Word of God,
Naught else is worth believing.
Though all my heart should feel condemned
For lack of some sweet token
There is One greater than my heart
Whose Word cannot be broken !
I'll trust in God's unchanging Word
Till soul and body sever
For; though all things shall pass away,
His Word shall stand forever!"

The Purpose of Holy Spirit Conviction Is To Produce Spiritual Emotions

Galatians 5:22 says, "*...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...*"

Holy Spirit Conviction Is Always Specific

When the Holy Spirit convicts us of something it will always be something specific. When Satan deals with guilt it is usually to put the Christian on a guilt trip feeling he is simply a bad Christian.

Ten Minutes Without Sinning?

Some years ago I was discussing with another preacher about this subject. I asked him if he thought it was possible for a Christian to live for ten minutes without sinning. He did not hesitate to answer...*"No is not possible."*

The next day we traveled together for about thirty minutes before stopping for lunch. There was nearly a half hour wait in the restaurant before we were seated.

When we sat down I asked my friend if he had sinned in the car on the way to the restaurant. He thought for a moment and said he had not. I asked have you sinned since we got to the restaurant?... he said, "No I don't believe I have." He concluded it was possible to for ten minutes without sinning.

The Devil would like us to believe we are totally sinful. The truth is, Jesus said the Holy Spirit would convince us of *"...sin, and of righteousness..."* (John 16:8)

When is the last time you allowed the Holy Spirit to convince you that you had done something right? Satan would have us believe we can't do anything that would glorify God. If the Holy Spirit convicts a person of something, it will be specific. We should be able to write down what it is.

A Definite Way Out

When the Holy Spirit deals with us He offers a way out of our situation. The Bible says, in First John 1:9 *"If we confess our sins, he is*

faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Satan's guilt offers no hope. After he inflicts us with guilt, he then leads us to depression, discouragement and doubt.

What Should A Christian Do?

Reject Satan's guilt. Listen carefully to the preaching of the Word and reject everything that has no Scriptural foundation.

They Even Checked Out Paul

Most preacher in fundamental circles would purpose to *"...preach the word,"* however, Paul the apostle commended the Christians at Berea because they checked out every-thing he said with the Scriptures. The Bible says after he preached they, *"...searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."* (Acts 17:11) How much more should we do the same when someone who is not inspired of God, preaches today? **If it is not according to the Word of God, reject it and reject the guilt trip that will come with it.**

Welcome Holy Spirit Conviction

There was a day when our *"church services"* were considered *"worship services."* We should begin a service eager to receive the conviction the Holy Spirit brings during the message. There are a few people who really want God to speak to them personally and they are the same few people who are quick to respond to the Holy Spirit when the service is over. It usually seems the people who least need to walk an aisle are the first one to do so.

Enjoy the Christian life and enjoy the strong preaching by a pastor who is faithful to the Word. Second Timothy 4:2 commands the preacher to, *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."*

The Faithful Preacher Must Preach

The faithful preacher must be willing to preach, so that when he stands before God to give an answer for his ministry he will be able to say, *"I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest."* (Psalm 40:9)

Preacher are commanded to, *"...preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."* (Colossians 1:28)

The preacher is commanded in to *"...exhort, and rebuke with all authority."* (Titus 2:15) The preacher must be able to say as Paul said in Acts 20:27, *"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."*

The problem that arises when listening to a faithful preacher preach, *"...all the counsel of God,"* is sincere Christians may leave every service discouraged and feeling like failures.

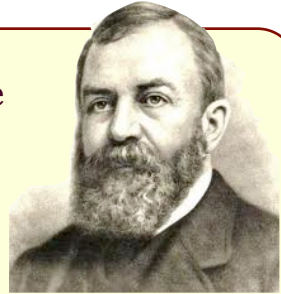
The sincere Christian might feel guilty when listening to a message on winning the lost regardless of how faithful he or she is in that area. The same could be said concerning a message on loving one another or studying the Bible etc. etc.

We must discern the difference between guilt and conviction.

- **Holy Spirit Conviction**...encourages.
- **Satan's guilt**...discourages.
- **Holy Spirit Conviction**...draws us closer to God.
- **Satan's guilt**...draws us away from God.
- **Holy Spirit Conviction**... focuses on facts.
- **Satan's guilt**...focuses on feelings.
- **Holy Spirit Conviction**...focuses on us being something.
- **Satan's guilt**...focuses on doing something.
- **Holy Spirit Conviction**...focus on empowering us.
- **Satan's guilt**...focuses on making us think we are inadequate.

Results of True Repentance

by D.L. Moody



D. L. Moody

"I want to call your attention to what true repentance leads to.

I am one of those who believe that there is a

good deal of repentance to be done by the Church before much good will be accomplished in the world. I firmly believe that the low standard of Christian living is keeping a good many in the world and in their sins.

When a man is not deeply convicted of sin, it is a pretty sure sign that he has not truly repented. Experience has taught me that men who have very slight conviction of sin, sooner or later lapse back into their old life. **For the last few years I have been a good deal more anxious for a deep and true work in professing converts than I have for great numbers.**

If a man professes to be converted without realizing the heinousness of his sins, he is likely to be one of those stony ground hearers who don't amount to anything.

I believe we are making a woeful mistake in taking so many people into the Church who have never been truly convicted of sin. Sin is just as black in a man's heart today as it ever was. I sometimes think it is blacker. For the more light a man has, the greater his responsibility, and therefore the greater need of deep conviction."

For Moody's Entire Message

On This Subject Go To -

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