

THE OAKWOOD ROAD

CONTENDER

“...exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith...”

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Worthy or Worthily?

With the present day expressions taking hold and often repeated with little or no thought, it does us good to occasionally pause and give consideration to certain expressions that have been adopted and put into frequent usage. Some of these expressions may be in correct accord with the word of God, others are quite out of harmony. It is the latter that we need to shun, to give way to expressions and wording that is in accord with Bible usage.

One such expression that has been widely adopted is found in the first epistle by Paul to the Corinthians, 11:27. He here says: "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." (KJV.) From this passage, many today will offer the prayer that we might be "worthy" to partake of the bread and fruit of the vine. However, such is not the teaching of this particular passage.

If the Lord were to make one's being "worthy" an essential feature in par-

taking of the Lord's Supper, I fear many of us would fall under the above condemnation, as all have sinned (Rom. 3:23, I John 1:5-10), and are thus unworthy to partake of this blessed memorial. Being guilty of sin and limited judgments, who is man to determine within himself that he is worthy to partake of these memorials of the body and blood of our Lord.

However, as mentioned, this is not the teaching of this passage. The American Standard Version renders the correct meaning more clearly, translating it thusly: "Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord." The word worthily (KJV) is an adverb, describing the manner in which the elements are partaken, and not the condition of the one partaking (adjective). All the Bible says about the condition of the one partaking is that the supper was designed for those "in the kingdom" (Matt. 27:39-44), and since the kingdom is the church, it would be those in the church-- Christians.

But, then, the question is asked: Why the

condemnation if the one is merely eating or drinking in an "improper fashion?" Is not a memorial a memorial, regardless of how accepted? This question is not hard to answer if we will but place ourselves in the shoes of the New Testament disciples. The supper (as instituted by Christ) is a spiritual memorial with very special significance attached, as they recognized. It was a means of drawing them closer to the realization of the benefits obtained by the death of Christ on the cruel cross of Calvary. (I Cor. 10:14-17.) In partaking with a flippant attitude--not really concerned whether he bother with it or not, one was actually making a mockery of this sacred memorial--intentionally or otherwise. By so acting, he was; as guilty of mocking the death of Christ and his claims of deity, as were the Jews who mocked Him at the cross. (Matt. 27.) With this attitude, such a one stood condemned in the eyes of God.

Lacking the proper spiritual attitude, and thus obtaining nothing in the way of spiritual growth and renewed courage during this part of the worship (and more than likely, nothing during the rest either), is it any wonder Paul said, "For this cause many among you are weak and sickly and not a few asleep?" (I Cor. 11:30.) With such an attitude, how could they worship God "in spirit and truth?" (John 4:24.) Thinking only of themselves, such was impossible. (I Cor. 11: 20.) If the spiritual value of this Supper be destroyed, so will be the individuals who, by their ungodly attitudes (lacking the proper attitude), have led to its downfall by their unconcern for its place in their lives. (vs. 27, 29.)

Let us indeed guard ourselves that we speak properly (I Pet. 4:11), as well as being sure our motives are also correct. Then can we indeed develop, as God desires.

-Donald Ames

Article appeared in Truth Magazine in April 1962

DAILY BIBLE READING

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| April 9 | II Sam. 11-13 |
| April 10 | II Sam. 14-16 |
| April 11 | II Sam. 17-19 |
| April 12 | II Sam. 20-22 |
| April 13 | II Sam. 23 - I Kgs. 1 |
| April 14 | I Kgs. 2-4 |
| April 15 | I Kgs. 5-7 |

NEWS AND NOTES

Remember in your prayers who have health issues

Men's training class April 15 at 11:00 am focusing on leader in the worship

See Lisa for details on the ladies Bible study

Take the cards on the table in the back and encourage Bible studies.

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