

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Theme: Encouragement

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The Brake Is On!

Bill Brinkworth

"Yippee" was the feeling of glee the young driver felt. It was the first time for her to drive after she got her license. All those school classes on driver safety, reading and reciting that boring driver's manual were finished, and now the moment of freedom was not far away. She could go anywhere daddy's car would take her.

"Well, what's the first thing I should do? Check the driver's mirror. Check. Check the rear-view mirror. Oops, my lipstick needs a little more on the top lip. Double-check. Adjust seat. Put on the seat belt. Check. Put the key in, and turn it on." A little burst of excitement made her smile as she was seconds from a world she had wanted to enter for way too long. "Put it in drive, and away we go," she giggled. This was it. "A little bit on the accelerator, and?"

The car would not move. "Maybe a little more gas?" The car inched forward, lurching and jerking. It did not want to cooperate. "Hmm. What didn't I do?" The novice driver double-checked everything she had done so many times before.

More gas, and still the car lurched forward. "Something is wrong here," she concluded. "I had better check with Dad." As she put the car in park, turned off the ignition, and prepared to leave the vehicle, something caught her eye. Someone had left the emergency brake on. Again, she restarted the car, removed the emergency brake, put it in gear, applied the gas, and she was off. The brake made it almost impossible for her to get anywhere!

In church, there also may be securely applied brakes that keep many from going forward for God. The applicators of the brake often mean well, but sometimes, they unintentionally restrict others from moving smoothly forward in Christian service.

These "brakes" are often:

- Unkind, unthought-out words such as, “We ain’t done it that way before,” “That’s not how we do it around here,” “When you’ve been saved as long as I have, you’ll know better,” and “I’d never do it that way.” Although there should be proper ways to do things, since any ministry is representing the church, too often we can deflate one’s enthusiasm to move forward for God because of unedifying, self-purposing, wrong words.
- Very few attend church-wide events such as church, prayer meetings, visitation, church dinners, or other church functions. Lack of attendance instantly sends a message to those who attend that they are not like anyone else, and maybe they are “taking this “Christian” thing too seriously.” Immediately, their zeal is quenched, and they soon could become one more Christian who is sitting and not serving.
- The longstanding members and leaders do not attend church regularly. New converts and visitors see their lack of support for the ministry and instantly halt their zeal in attending. “Well, if they’re not coming, then maybe it is not important for me to attend all the time,” could be their thoughts.
- Members are late. Lateness gives a clear impression of the importance of attendance. One would not think of being late for school or work because it is essential. Church attendance is also important!
- Complaining and murmuring among members magnifies to the on-looker that maybe this is not a happy church family. It also does not help when someone in public prayer makes it clear that they are not satisfied with something that is going on in the church. Under the guise of spirituality, it is sometimes prayed aloud, “Please pray for Brother So-and-so that he will get his heart right and stop lying,” or some other cutting remark about a situation. Those cowardly attacks never do anything positive; they only increase discord and hurt feelings. No one is usually fooled and realizes that the person is venting his opinion about how they think people or situations should be dealt with in the church.

The Holy Spirit should handle most situations and not us! If we need to ensure the matter is handled, it should be dealt with first on a one-to-one basis (*Matthew 18:15-17*)!

There are enough obstacles in serving the Lord without discouraging others, intentionally or unintentionally. The work is great, and so is the battle (*Ephesians 6:12*).

There is more said in the Bible about encouraging others and ourselves than there is in our being volunteer holy spirits, and our telling others how to serve God. The real Holy Spirit can certainly do a better job in speaking to hearts and guiding one in the way He would like it done. We need to be more like accelerators, and less often “brakes”!

“If you are busy rowing the boat, you won’t have time to rock it!”

Assurance

Author Unknown

Pelopidas, when informed that the number of the enemy was double that of his army, replied, “So much the better. We shall conquer so many the more.” His intelligent self-assurance was more powerful than a thousand spears.

“It takes little intelligence, character, or spirituality to criticize. However, it does take all three to encourage others!”

“I Have Nothing to Complain About!”

Bill Brinkworth

One of our favorite blessings in the nursing home ministry is L. We asked her the other day how she was, and she cheerfully replied, “Brother Bill, I’d like to complain about something, but I honestly cannot find anything to complain about.”

Another time, when asked what she was thankful for, she quipped, “I am so thankful for my health.” She meant this from her heart, as she sat in her wheelchair receiving oxygen much of the day and needing the care provided for her by the nursing home.

What a testimony she is to us who have so much more, but complain too often about our “little” afflictions.

“The men who are lifting the world upward and onward are those who encourage more than they criticize.” — Elizabeth Harrison

Christ, Our Banner

C. H. Spurgeon

The army’s banner was a source of consolation to the wounded. There he lies, the good knight. Well has he fought without fear and without reproach. A chance arrow pierced the joints of his harness, and his life is oozing out from the ghastly wound.

No one is there to unbuckle his helmet or give him a draught of cooling water. His frame is locked up in that hard case of steel, and though he feels the smart from the wound, he cannot gain the remedy. He hears the cries, the mingled cries, the hoarse shouts of men that rush in fury against their fellows, and he opens his eyes as yet he has not fainted with his bleeding. Where, think you, does he look? He turns himself around. What is he looking for? For friend? For comrade? No.

Should they come to him, he would say, “Just lift me, and let me sit against that tree awhile and bleed here, but go you to the fight.”

Where is that restless eye searching, and what object is it looking for? Yes, he has it, and the face of the dying man is brightened. He sees the banner still waving, and with his last breath, he cries, “On! On! On!” He falls asleep content because his troop’s banner is safe. It has not been cast down. Though he has lost, the flag is secure.

Even so, every true soldier of the Cross rejoices in its triumph. We fall, but Christ does not. We die, but the cause prospers. When my heart was most sad, sad as it never was before nor since, that sweet text, “Him hath God the Father exalted, and given him a name that is above every name,” immensely cheered my soul and set me again in peace and comfort. Our banner is still flying, and there is hope!

Prepare for the Daily Battle!

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;” Ephesians 6:10-18