

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Burning Bridges

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When growing up, I often heard the good advice, “Don’t burn the bridges behind you, in case you have to go back.” That wisdom meant that if you were quitting a job, leave under good circumstances, in case you had to work there again or if they had to give you a reference. If it were the end of the school year, it would be wise to leave in good standing with all the students in case you had to share classes with them next year. If you were moving out of the neighborhood, it would be smart to leave a decent impression with your neighbors rather than leaving them with a bad one of you. You never knew if you would bump into them again. I was taught to try to keep the door open so that you could always go back or be welcomed if you had to return.

It is good advice – in most cases. One exception is when it applies to living the Christian life. When a person solely trusts Christ for his salvation, he is born again into the family of God. He is a new creature. He is free from the bondage of sin. God does not want him to go back into the same mess from which he was saved.

If God saved a person and helped him overcome the sin of lying, God certainly does not want him to go back into the same sin. If God delivered a person from the clutches of a terrible drinking habit, He does not want him back in the same situation. When the Almighty saves us and cleans our lives up, He wants us to stay from sin that will hurt us. He gives us a second chance.

The only way we can keep from going back into the same sin God delivered us from is to keep away from it. The safest way to protect yourself from returning to the lifestyle God rescued you from is to “burn the bridges” behind you. In this situation, it is good advice to make it so you cannot return to what you once were.

I learned this lesson in many ways when I first was saved. God dealt with me about my sin of not taking proper care of my body by smoking. He convicted my heart to keep from defiling my life with that sin (I Corinthians 3:16-17), but it was too hard for me to quit. I needed His help. God impressed on my heart that if I made it public to my friends and family that I was quitting smoking, it would be somewhat embarrassing to go back on my word. By telling everyone, I “burnt the bridges behind me,” making it difficult to return to that sin. I did just that, and it helped.

Later, God impressed on me that I needed to stay away from certain friends, as I would follow them into sin. It was hard to stop seeing them. God showed me from some Bible passages that my new responsibility as a Christian was to tell my friends how they could be saved. It was hard,

but I found that some listened. Others decided that if I were going to live a godly life, they would not have anything to do with me (ironic isn't it; they would be your friend when you did wrong, but not when you did right). This "burnt the bridges" behind those relationships, so I could not go back into the same life of sin I had come from, and could only move forward spiritually.

God loves you so much that He sacrificed His only Son's (Jesus) life so that you could spend eternity in Heaven. If you trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for your salvation (Roman 10:9), you are a child of God. He saved you from the punishment of sin. You cannot lose your salvation. It is a gift freely given to you forever. With this gift comes a new life and the possibility of a new future. Do not go back into the same life from which you were saved. *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate ..."* II Corinthians 6:17

The pull to go back into the same sinful life you were born into is too great for anyone to resist. King David could not resist the temptation of sin. King Solomon could not. Samson could not, nor could Lot's wife, Moses, Peter, Saul, Delilah, or you. Make it inconvenient for yourself to go back into the same life and habits that you asked God to deliver you from. "Burn the bridges," so you cannot return to a life of not pleasing or living for God.

"Your character is what you do when no one is watching." — Author Unknown

You Tell on Yourself

The Lighted Pathway

You tell on yourself by the friends you seek,
By the manner in which you speak,
By the way you employ your leisure time,
By the use you make of dollar and dime.

You tell what you are by the things you wear,
By the spirit in which your burdens bear,
By the kind of things at which you laugh,
By the records you play on the phonograph.

You tell what you are by the way you walk,
By the things of which you delight to talk,
By the manner in which you bear defeat,
By so simple a thing as how you eat.

By the books you choose from the well-filled shelf;
In these ways and more, you tell on yourself.
So, there's really no particle of sense
In an effort to keep up the false pretense.

"The most valuable gift you can give another is your good example!"

— Author Unknown

Which Way

Cuyler

On the top of a hill in a western state is a courthouse situated so that when the raindrops hit one side of the roof, they flow into Lake Erie. They then flow to the St. Lawrence and eventually into the Atlantic.

When the rain falls on the other side of the roof, the drops trickle down from rivulet to river, until they reach the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Eventually, they end up in the Gulf of Mexico.

A faint breath of wind determines the destination of those raindrops for three thousand miles. A single act determines human destiny for all time and eternity.

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” *Joshua 24:15*

The Apprentice

Spencer

In the early 1800s, a boy was an apprentice in one of the trades. He was an ordinary boy, with one exception — he was a Christian. However, his early training was soon forgotten.

He shared his sleeping quarters with an ungodly apprentice. On going to bed, he was ashamed of being seen to pray before he retired for the night. Instead of being laughed at, he refused to bend his knee beside his bed when retiring for the night. His regard for what he had learned at a very young age became uninfluential. Soon his behavior was very much like the boy he shared the room with, who never was trained any differently.

Another apprentice came to the master. He was to share the room with the other two boys. The new apprentice was accustomed to pray and knelt by his bed every night. He ignored any ridicule and earnestly prayed on.

His consistency in nightly talking to his Father, stirred remembrance in the other apprentice's heart. As the new boy persevered and prayed, the other lad's conscience became severely condemned.

Shame to pray in the presence of his fellow-apprentice was the first step in his downward course. The unhappy and fallen youth was once more brought to reflection about righteous living. With a firmer purpose than ever, he again purposed himself and continued doing the right spiritual things — no matter what others thought. His continuance in doing the right thing continued throughout his life. As years past, the man became a famous pastor in Birmingham.

How much harm do we get from one act of indecision or one wrong decision? How much may one proper act do good? Who can tell what may be the result of turning ungodly practices into godly lifestyles?

“Youth and beauty fade; character lasts forever!”