

Whatever Happened to Just Doing the Right Thing?

Written by Steve Stutzman

I was in some private discussions lately that left me wondering a lot.... Whatever happened to just doing the right thing? It's almost as if we have become afraid of it somehow... afraid we will be, or be labeled, as self-righteous, or Pharisaical, or some other terrible malady will seize upon us, if we simply do the right thing.

Conflict comes up between brothers in a church, over money issues in business. Tempers flare, words are spoken, lies get involved.... What ever happened to just DOING THE RIGHT THING? Give in. Let it go. Let the guy have the \$\$\$. It's only money, after all. (1 Cor. 6:7)

Husbands come crying because their wife is mistreating them. Wives come crying because their feelings are being hurt, or they are not being heard. I realize these are often very, very painful situations. I also realize they cannot all be treated in blanket statements, because of the complexity of the situations. But it seems to me, one thing remains fairly constant- Do the right thing. As Emerson Eggrich so powerfully points out in the book 'Love and Respect', each man will be asked one day, "Did you show self-crucifying love to your wife?" There is no exception clause there for what kind of woman she is. The wife will be asked, "Did you do whatever you need to do to make this man feel respected?" ...again, no exception clause for jerks. (Eph 5:33)

The traffic gets jammed up, and people get all cranked up and pass on the left shoulder, etc etc. Why? Just do the right thing. I know it will make you late. So what? It's making me late too. And you going around and butting in, is wrong. Do the right thing. (Matt 7:12)

Another homeless guy is sitting at the crossroad bumming quarters.... probably not being very honest with his sign. Do the right thing.

A girl is all upset because her parents want her to dress a certain way, and she doesn't want to. So do the right thing already. So maybe your parents are old-fashioned and religious, stuck in a by-gone era. So what? If clothes can't keep you out of heaven, and we know for certain they can't get you in, then just do the right thing. (Col 3:20)

Disagreements arise in churches, between brothers and sisters. Tongues wag, emotions skyrocket, people begin to react far more out of the emotion of the moment than from reality of Eternity. "Which side shall I join? Who is RIGHT? Who is going to WIN?" we ask anxiously. All focus goes to the direct issue at hand. Relationships, and any value they might have before God, gets put on a back burner. We begin to be very selective

about who is coming over for dinner, or who we sit beside in church. Being RIGHT is most important of all. Really? Whatever happened to doing the right thing? Like, having a conversation with someone we disagree with, and blessing them for things of Christ we see in their lives? Like, going out of our way to speak good and not evil? Like, believing in them even tho it is reasonably certain our trust is misplaced and we will be hurt? (1 Cor 13:4-6)

" But Steve, you just don't understand my situation!"

No, I agree, I probably don't.. But the Spirit said clearly thru Paul that "it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing," (Gal 4:18) even tho Paul was making the point that those good things will not save you. When Jesus gave the allegory of the wise man and the house on a rock, the ROCK He spoke of was hearing..... and DOING THE RIGHT THING. But I have to ask- Why is it that something rises up in this generation and screams at the simple notion of doing the right thing?

" No religion," we parrot, "Only Jesus". Good. Please notice, however, that Jesus always did the right thing.... and if you would be a Disciple, then do the right thing.

No amount of "just doing the right thing" will bring you into a right standing before a Holy God. That standing comes only by faith in Christ Jesus, trusting Him and entering into His death and resurrection, being cleansed by His blood thru faith, having Christ in you. That is the gospel. That is the reality of Eternal Life.

I am simply saying, if you have that Life, then do the right thing. What else do you want to do, the wrong thing? Doing the right thing glorifies Christ (makes Him look good). The more difficult it is humanly speaking, the more it glorifies in the heavenlies. Doing the right thing keeps prayers from being hindered. Doing the right thing establishes righteousness on earth. Doing the right thing aligns your life with His Spirit. Doing the right thing strengthens relationships. Doing the right thing is redemptive. Doing the right thing is faith on display. Doing the right thing reflects Eternal life onto a fallen world.

And don't forget Kingdom economics..... Doing the right thing is the way we begin to understand. (John 7:17) If we determine to do the right thing, and do it, we will understand. Doing the right thing builds spiritual authority.

This New Year- do the right thing.