

Approved!

A great heartbreak in the ministry comes when we see and know of people serviceable in the kingdom of God flounder, founder and fail. One of the chilling warnings of Paul is, *"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway"* (I Corinthians 9:27). The Greek word for castaway is *adokimos*, which is defined as "rejected or not standing the test, not approved." This word has a root used elsewhere in the Bible when it says, *"Salute Apelles approved in Christ..."* (Romans 16:10). In commendation of this servant of the Lord named Apelles, Paul says of him that he is "approved," from the Greek word, *dokimos* meaning "pleasing, acceptable or accepted, particularly of coins and money." The late Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse in commenting on the meaning of this word "approved" said, "In the ancient world there was no banking system as we know it today and no paper money. All money was made from metal, heated until liquid, poured into molds and allowed to cool. When the coins were cooled, it was necessary to smooth off the uneven edges. The coins were comparatively soft and, of course, many people shaved them closely. In one century, more than eighty laws were passed in Athens to stop the practice of shaving down the coins then in circulation. But some moneychangers were men of integrity who would accept no counterfeit money. They were men of honor who put only genuine full weighted money into circulation. Such men were called "dokimos" or "approved."

A worthwhile goal for any of us would be to be men like those of ancient time, "approved" men, men of integrity who put into circulation only true money. The main reason America has spent millions of dollars to manufacture new multi-colored twenty dollar bills is because there are so many being counterfeited with the computer ease of the day in which we live. Keeping this thought in mind about being genuine, sincere, and above reproach in all moral matters, here are some simple ways we may stay "approved" before our Lord:

I. Know that God sees when we look toward another person, place, thing, or false god as our source of strength or happiness.

Psalm 44:20, 21 says, *"If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart."*

The only "coinage" that will spend in God's kingdom is the walk of faith in honor to Him. Should we look to another we are "shaving the edges." How dangerous is this practice? Let's look into the days of older King Solomon, who began looking for worldly approval and satisfaction when he multiplied to himself wives among other pleasures of this world: *"For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God..."* (I Kings 11:4).

II. Come to reckoning with the fact that God is going to require an accountability of our life.

Job said in Job 31:14, *"What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?"*

Solomon said, *"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil"* (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

The New Testament says, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (II Corinthians 5:10).

I am alarmed at how little we hear said about the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is a very real doctrine taught in the Bible. If I had to guess why we don't hear as much about it these days, I would speculate it is because of the tolerant attitude toward sin that prevails, even in our churches. It doesn't change the fact that Romans 14:12 says, *"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."*

How different we would live if we keep in mind that we shall stand before Jesus and give account.

II Pray that God might reveal to us those things in our life that may be offensive to Him.

Job said in Job 13:23, "*How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.*" Elihu said in Job 34:32, "*That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*"

One of the reasons we often emphasize daily, regular devotions is because we must have a spiritual "safety net" as we walk through this world below. The human heart apart from God's guidance is in trouble, for the Scripture says, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings*" (Jeremiah 17:9,10).

In this walk with the Lord a prayer that is well worth praying is found in David's life: "*O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*" (Psalm 139:1, 23-24).

As we stay "hot" in pursuit of God (Psalm 42:1), we shall discover the words of Hosea to be true, "*Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD...*" (Hosea 6:3). As we seek Him, God will let us know if our life begins to fall into the category of "disapproved." God help us to be like Apelles, one worthy of salute! "*Salute Apelles approved in Christ...*" (Romans 16:10).

- Pastor Pope -

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