



Jan. 14, 2007 (Vol. 6)

## "GREY AREAS"

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Sometimes we talk about "grey areas". Sometimes it is voiced that we must just learn to get along in these "grey areas". But in reality, nothing is grey to God.

The contrast between light (Truth) and darkness (error) is illustrated in many passages (Lk. 11:34; Jn. 3:19; 1 Pet. 2:9; etc.). John is very easily understood, when he writes: "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). God is light, Truth. There is no darkness in Him at all. There is not even a speck of darkness or mingling of darkness. Can God fellowship some sin, some error? No.

Consider it this way. Any action is either right or wrong, permissible or forbidden. It is either on the straight & narrow path of Heaven or on the broad way that leads to destruction (Mt. 7:13-14). Is there another road? Is there a third path that we have overlooked? If not, then why do we think there are grey areas?

When we are ignorant of Truth, things appear unclear to us. When we face something we have not yet studied - then it is easy to call such a "grey area". For example, many people struggle with whether they can participate in war. Some people consider this a "grey" area. They are unsure & uncertain. Why? If we have not yet come to the knowledge of the Truth on this topic, we will just not know. We may even see the logic of punishing evil doers, but struggle with "Thou shalt not kill" passages that seem to forbid taking any life.

Also, people may in their conscience have strong doubts against being a policeman or soldier. But again, does that make this a "grey issue"? Does God's word address this? Or is God's word unclear on this? As individuals we may be uncertain & unsure or may even be VERY convinced that it is wrong. Does this mean God calls it a sin? Or does this mean God has NOT spoken clearly on this matter? No.

God rules out murder (Rev. 21:8), but not legitimate use of authority to withstand & punish evil doers (Lk. 3:14; Rom. 13:4). Thus, in principle, it is authorized to be a policeman or soldier. And when necessary, these may be called upon to use the full extent of their powers to enforce justice & stop evil doers. Also, Romans 14 teaches us that our conscience is not standard for Truth. We must come to understand what the Truth is on this topic (cp. Rom. 14:3, 14a), even if our conscience still hinders us from

personally being a soldier or policeman (Rom. 14:14b). If we just do not know what Truth is - then we must be very cautious about what we do & say. It is rash & unwise to take a position on any subject without understanding what God's word says on the matter.

Some ignorance is just understandable. We obviously don't start out knowing the answers to everything and it takes time to learn and grow. But we should beware continuing to be ignorant about things. It is possible to choose to not know the Truth (2 Pet. 3:5).

Ignorance is not safe (2 Pet. 3:16), for it leaves us uncertain about Truth & vulnerable to accepting (or even promoting) error. But sometimes there is also "unstedfastness" involved (2 Pet. 3:16). This means that there is some motive or pressure that is competing with love for Truth (2 Pet. 2:14). Whether it is worldly fears or earthly loves, there is something that is pulling the "unstedfast" person in a different direction than what God would have them go. This could be false doctrine which deceives (Luke 8:12), fear of persecution (Luke 8:13) or the cares & pleasures of this life (Luke 8:14). Clearly, we need to resist these pressures & temptations.

In both cases, ignorance & unstedfastness, we need very much to bring the light of Truth to bear, exposing error for what it is & illuminating the proper path (Eph. 5:11-13). We need to grow in knowledge & cultivate a strong commitment to Truth regardless of the earthly consequences (2 Pet. 3:17-18). And we need to extend encouragement & edification to one another, so that none of us will be "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14). Plainly we need to know & love the Truth in order to be firmly established & anchored in the way that pleases God.

Again, the Bible says that Truth has been revealed (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It is able to make the man of God complete. It provides "all things for life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). Therefore, whenever we encounter an area that is confusing or "grey" to us - we should very quickly & diligently inquire of the Lord for an answer. Look to Him, His word - search it out carefully. Set your heart fully to the task of knowing God's will on the difficulty before you. It may take some time to discover & understand. We may even find answers that at not what we hoped for. Even so, there is an answer. And we know that God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33).

As it is written, "**Ask**, and it shall be given you; **seek**, and ye shall find; **knock**, and it shall be opened unto you: for **every one that asketh receiveth**; and **he that seeketh findeth**; and **to him that knocketh it shall be opened.**" (Matt. 7:7-8)

## COMPASSION

The word translated "compassion" in English is actually from about 5 different Greek words. Briefly,

let's just look at the definitions (from Vine's Expository Dictionary) and consider how they apply.

"To have pity, a feeling of distress through the ills of others, is used of God's compassion, Rom. 9:15." Does this describe us? Do we, like God, feel distress when other suffer? Or do we only feel distress when we ourselves suffer? Do we even notice when others are undergoing hard times? Or is it all about ourselves, and how we feel?

"To suffer with another, to be affected similarly, to be touched with". Christ was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4:15), having been in all ways tempted like we are, yet He did not give in to sin. Have you ever considered that our High Priest understands, truly understands what you are going through? Sometimes, when we suffer, we think no one can possibly understand. And we may even go so far as to think that no one really cares. Yet Christ both understands and cares. And His understanding helps us to come to Him and seek His throne of mercy. He does not approve of sin, He did not give in to it, but He does understand and has provided a way out of it. Therefore, "Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need." (Heb. 4:16)

"To have mercy, to show kindness, by benevolence, or assistance". What good is sympathy and feeling if it is not put into proper & productive actions? As in James 2:14ff, we may have faith and express a blessing upon the poor & naked; but if we do not do what we can, then our faith is barren and dead. So, is our compassion moving us to actually do something good? Do we feed the hungry, comfort

the sorrowful, strengthen the faint, lift up the hands of those who labor, seek the erring, or invite the lost? "Feeling" compassionate is of no benefit, if we do not ACT in compassion. After all, God's compassion moved Him to act - shouldn't ours also?

#### PEOPLE TO REMEMBER & PRAY FOR

**Othena Kinnard, Mag Bumbalough, Thelma Cunningham, Mary Cox, Monie Petty, Dave Poteet, Joshua & Misty Poteet, Rose Taylor, Dorris Williams, Betty & Robert England, Johanna Fletcher, Ed Williams, Joe Smith, Lydia Poe, Mike Tenpenny, Thelma Klein, Nathan Hill and Alisa Fletcher** (expecting). Also, **Reba Jones** (Dorris Williams' niece), **Jackie Tindle** (cancer, relative of the Sims), **John Ross Key** (Mary Cox's son), **Marci Miller** (Alisa Fletcher's mother), **Ocia Bell Jones** (Doris William's mother), **Ruth Williams** (Betty England's niece), **Pauline Hickey, Nanny Witaker, Dylan Roberts** (grandson of Marilyn's friend); **Kitty Mahan** (Kathy Tenpenny's mother), **Dwayne Williams** (Dorris William's son), **Jeff England** (Robert & Betty's son), **Paul Grissom, Carl Williams** (Ed's brother).

#### THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Home Bible Study** - Sat., Jan. 20.
- **Business Meeting** - Sun. Jan. 28.
- **Ladies Class** - 2nd & Last Sunday Each Month.
- **GM** - Jeff Smith, April 15-20, 2007.
- **GM** - R. McPherson, Oct.14-19, 2007.
- **GM** - Brian Yeager, April 13-18, 2008.
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

#### ***North Sparta church of Christ***

359 North Spring St.  
Sparta TN 38583  
(931) 836-3321

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Here