

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Strife and Slander

Strife and Slander - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/2/22 10:16

This section has the following description;

"Test everything, Hold on to the good." - 1 Thess 5:21. Here you will find discussions on all different scriptures and theological positions. Please discuss with an spirit of edification not dissention or strife.

This forum here has it's differences from what may be common place out in the main. In it's inception there was a greater sense of giving place to one another even in difficult discussions. It may be any number of factors but two words come to mind almost without fail when things have begun to go off track.

Strife and Slander

There is a whole host of scripture to be looked at and maybe this might be a help to reel in and reconsider these things and apply them to our hearts and to our minds, lastly to the fingers that type out our expressions here before each other and of first note, before the Lord.

For starters;

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, **strife**, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.
Gal 5:13-26

As an aside, might we be more prayerful at all times.

Re: Strife and Slander - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2006/2/22 16:07

Good word. It reminded me of the following, written by Alan a while back. An exhortation to the body of Christ to be watchful with our tongues and heart....

Beware of the Whisperer

There is a softly spoken word that does not edify our faith, but instead breeds doubt and death among the people of God. This whisper is wicked; it is called murmuring. Moses recounts it as the reaction of the people to the "evil report" they received from the ten spies who saw clearly the size of the giants, while having no vision for the greatness of God. The consequences of murmuring are devastating to those defiled by it. The following passage from Deuteronomy 1:2-3 should serve as a sober reminder: "It takes eleven days to go from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea by the Mount Seir road. In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month..."

How does an eleven day journey become forty years of wandering in the wilderness? A whisper! Even as "a soft answer can turn away wrath," so a soft whisper can turn away faith.

Moses wrote about the recommendation to explore the land, a fact finding endeavor to gather more information before blindly obeying God's command. In Deuteronomy 1:23 he stated, "The idea seemed good to me." He never envisioned the end result of what at the time seemed like such a good idea. When the exploration committee submitted their rep

ort to the people, it was 10 to 2 a thumbs down, no go, “evil report.” Evil report is the word used in Numbers 13:32 and we shall not be surprised to discover, in the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Dictionary, the root meaning of this Hebrew word is whispering.

We need to understand the cause-effect relationship between “evil reports” and “murmuring.” The Strong’s Concordance number for “evil report” is 1681; its basic idea is slander. Two related words are “to move slowly, and to be sluggish.” We learned a children’s song about obedience from friends that has become a favorite in our home; it has a line ending a verse, “to delay is to disobey.” When God clearly says go, He must not mean slow. The New Testament word diligence found in II Peter 1:5, “giving all diligence”, comes from the Greek word ὀψιμαχία; our English word “speed” comes from this. Urgency requires quick action, and we all know this when we add to our instructions “and hurry, be quick about it.” We know how sluggards think, “there is a lion outside;” doubters often seem to have good reason for their hesitation.

This calculated hesitation (doubt) will lead to the snare of the whisper, the main concern in this writing. Whispering/murmuring is a quiet conversation between fellow hesitators. It is very “reasonable”, although sadly with the “natural mind” rather than the mind of the Spirit.

If we are on the lookout for “proud defiance”, we can easily miss the subtlety of “private discussion.” These conversations will not take place in the openness of the main assembly, but in the privacy of individual homes. Moses purposely wrote, “But you were unwilling to go up; you rebelled against the command of the Lord your God. You grumbled in your tents.” It is not surprising that God’s chosen leadership is left out of doubt-filled dialogues. Moses, Joshua, and Caleb were out of touch with reality, so the Israelites found more comfort and compatibility in the privacy of their homes rather than a public encounter with faith-filled men. But just as Jesus warned, “For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad,” God heard and became very angry!

We should also not be surprised at the “apparent” legitimacy of these private discussions; appearances can be deceiving. The Septuagint, uses the Greek word ἠσυχία; for murmur; this word is found in Luke 15:2 “And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” The Pharisees did not win any public debates with Jesus, so it is understandable why they would often privately discuss His faults among themselves. But the Jewish leaders weren’t the only ones who murmured at Jesus; when the people saw him heading home with Zacharias, Luke records, “They all murmured, saying, that He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.” We can assume no one had the courage to openly ask Jesus why, but they were comfortable with discussing His actions among themselves. Beware of such conversation!

Doubtful dialogues may begin in the privacy of individual homes, but their unbelieving poison will quickly spread and pollute an entire assembly. We should remember another children’s song, “Oh be careful little ears what you hear.”

What is the end result of the deadly whisper? The same as Moses recorded in both Numbers and Deuteronomy. The people did not have faith to enter the land of promise, and wondered out loud, “Where can we go up?” The poisonous unbelief of the whisperer leaves people caught in the middle of not having faith to go forward and not having the desire to go back. It condemns them to a life of wandering around in a spiritual wilderness, caught between the land of milk and honey and the bondage of Egypt. In the land of the middle (spiritual indecision), a slow wandering death march begins and ends short of the promise of God.

A tragic result of this spiritual poisoning is that it does not lose the “appearance” of faith, but what looks like faith toward God has become in reality only a “form of godliness.” Gone is the abundant life of joy, peace in an intimate childlike faith, replaced by a “touch not, taste not, handle not” walk of fear of defilement. Gone is the new covenant liberty of the life and fruit of the Spirit against such there is no law, and in is the old covenant yoke of the legalism and tradition of a life lived by the Law. Praise and worship are replaced by privacy and withdrawal; self preservation takes precedence over public service. Standing firm in the Lord becomes a private concern, instead of a corporate commitment; personal safety overrules sacrificial love.

People wandering in the land of the middle (the death march of the whisperers) don’t throw away their bibles. They may read them daily, just like the murmurers continued to eat manna. They still claim to be led by the Spirit, even as those condemned to die in the wilderness were led by the pillar of cloud and fire. A few of them become like Dathan and Abihu, and gain courage to openly defy God’s chosen leadership, but the vast majority are deceived to die the slow spiritual death of religion without the joy of intimacy with Christ.

We need to understand the danger of listening to whispering conversations. A good verse to fix in our heart as a defense towards the poison of the murmurer is found in Ephesians 4:29, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your

mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.Â”

Paul warned Timothy and Titus to avoid destructive communication, and pursue Â”sound doctrineÂ”. Whisperers do not minister Â”well-balancedÂ” spiritual diets; rather, they often produce Â”doting about questions.Â” Paul used this expression in his letter to Timothy. The Greek word indicates a Â”diseased reasoningÂ”, or in other words, an infected way of thinking. This is in contrast to Â”soundÂ” doctrine which comes from the Greek word indicating Â”healthyÂ” instruction.

Accuracy does not equal purity; factual does not equal faithful. When factual conversation produces the fruit of hesitation and withdrawal, sin is not absent. The Jews from Jerusalem who came to Antioch, accurately reported that the Law of Moses required all who were to join the covenant of Sinai were required to be circumcised; however their factual perspective lacked the wisdom and insight of the Holy Spirit. When the full leadership of the church gathered, their factual statement was found wanting of spiritual wisdom.

May the Lord give us His Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, and may He cause our love to abound more and more in depth of knowledge and insight so that we may be able to discern what is best. Factual is not always what is best. Touch not, taste not, handle not, are derived from commands in the Law, and do have an appearance of wisdom. Nevertheless, the Letter still kills, whereas the Spirit gives life. Beware the deadly factual conversations of the whisperer, and commit to life giving edification of grace ministering faith.

Re: - posted by GaryE (), on: 2006/2/22 16:39

Markrohumia, that was a very good post.

Probably most Christians have fallen into this somewhere along the way, myself included. It is so easy to be chewing on the Pharisees bad leaven and not even know it. It has a way of coming out of our own mouth when we continue to chew it. I've had to reconsider and repent of the words of my mouth many times.

Who is Alan?

Re: Strife and Slander - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2006/2/22 16:53

Quote:

crsschk wrote:

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, **strife**, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be **desirous of vain glory**, provoking one another, envying one another.

Gal 5:13-26

As an aside, might we be more prayerful at all times.

I never thought I see the day that I disagreed with you Mike...well at least it's only small.

Two things in the Galatians passage that I'd like to highlight are "works of the flesh" and "desirous of vain glorying". I think the strife is just one of those things that we have to accept, as with "heresies (divisions)". Before you "light the pyre" hear me out on this. Strife is a work of the flesh, ie evidence of fleshliness in the life. When two peoples' opinions collide, one (or both) have to bow to scripture (hopefully one already has:-)). Strife is simply one of God's early warning systems to

hat this problem has arisen.

Where strife becomes a problem is when neither party will consider the other side, and one or both descend into slanderous comments (which cuts to the heart of Mike's post, so I guess we do agree after all:-)). As I am aware of the circumstances that were going on around this post, I'll add that this is what was going on, and that it seemed to arise from a misunderstanding.

At the end of the day, we need to be prepared to do our homework, one to be scripturally clear on the issue being discussed, and also to understand where the other person is coming from, along with cultural biases that they bring into the discussion (this is where PMs come in handy, as face can be saved on both sides while sorting out subtle differences of opinion - just make sure you're prepared to retract when God reveals error in your own opinion, in the interests of maintaining the integrity of the discussion).

Please feel free to challenge me on this. I'm not a moderator or anything here, however I think I have something of an understanding of how things go on here, and a diversity of viewpoints on the same issue can help to bring it clarity.

Peace.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2006/2/22 17:20

Bro. GaryE,
To answer your questions,
Beware of the Whisper, was written by Alan Martin.

Strife and Slander - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/2/23 9:00

Hi Aaron,

No 'strange fire' to be lit here. There is a sense of 'yeah, sort of' in the way you described the understanding of what strife *is*. But considering it's placement there in the midst of the other manifest works of the flesh (there is a key word there, *manifest*) would seem to indicate that it is not *acceptable*, maybe further passages will bear this out more so. Just as well, I do get your drift and would find a similar agreement...

Quote:
-----As I am aware of the of the circumstances that were going on around this post, I'll add that this is what was going on, and that it seemed to arise from a misunderstanding.

Again, 'sort of' :-D . These 'types' of things have been going on in recent months in various flare ups and that tense of want of proper expression has had these two words amongst others (I.E. bitterness, bearing false witness, accusations and presumptions, 'evil speaking' ...) in the front of the mind. So I guess it is just an outworking or an attempt at getting to the root, make that *heart* of the matter where the symptoms are just an indicator.

Quote:
-----Please feel free to challenge me on this. I'm not a moderator or anything here, however I think I have something of an understanding of how things go on here, and a diversity of viewpoints on the same issue can help to bring it clarity.

Almost want to say "me neither" :-P , but I guess I am... If there was any foolish 'boasting' it would be in the bleeding that often accompanies some of the things that can go on here, it is often very grievous and frustrating and ... revealing! The very things that can cause such a reaction in attempts to simmer them down can be both a snare and a revealing of that plank still logged right here in my own eye, the unmasking of things thought long since dead, my own over emoting, 'quick to speak, slow to hear'... A whole host of things. It is a fact that all this has greatly improved upon the prayer life. The Lords ways!

It's redundant, but most often if we all would recognize where we are, amongst the brethren, gathered two and three together and recognizing *Who* is in our midst in such circumstances... the matter of 'moderating' our own selves individually , giving place to one another and so forth ... Already the 'tone' seems to be shifting across many a posting. It is almost without fail, the *manner* over the 'content'. To be able to discuss and sharpen, seems almost that there is two different ways of looking at 'strife' and I think it is where you were putting the emphasis, one being '*striving*' as in;

Phi 1:27 Only let your **conversation** be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind **striving together for** the faith of the gospel;

My, that whole passage sums it up quite well. It was almost by accident that this was up in my search and as an expression of the other;

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. **Let nothing be done through strife** or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
Phi 2:1-8

Man, I love the scriptures, they are endless ... Already they want to branch off into the idea of what particular 'mind' and 'like-mindedness' we are speaking of, best to cut it short as a preamble to another ramble 8-)

Joh 13:35 By **this** shall all men **know** that ye are my disciples, **if** ye have **love** one to another.

Strife and Slander - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/2/23 9:29

makrothumia,

That is powerful, thank you. Difficult to extract from it as a whole, to just key in on this point though;

Quote:
-----"And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." The Pharisees did not win any public debates with Jesus, so it is understandable why they would often privately discuss His faults among themselves. But the Jewish leaders weren't the only ones who murmured at Jesus; when the people saw him heading home with Zacharias, Luke records, "They all murmured, saying, that He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." We can assume no one had the courage to openly ask Jesus why, but they were comfortable with discussing His actions among themselves. Beware of such conversation!

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Again, *manner*. "Murmuring", that launching forth of suspicion and assumption on the one hand and doubt, unbelief on the other. How closely related so many of these things are, bitterness, murmuring, slander...