



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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The Supremacy of the Word

We want to focus a few minutes on the supremacy of the Word, especially 2 Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God. Historically Anabaptists have been Biblicists. If we study some of the history and debates of the Anabaptists with the reformers and the Catholics, they always stood firmly on the Word of God. They said that the Word of God is the final answer and they will not

detour from that.

On the Lord's day and at other times we meet to worship the Lord. Our thoughts and activity also centre around the Scriptures. That is studying the Scriptures. Most of our service surrounds this in Sunday School, and the preaching service. We are Biblicists. We live in a day of gross and extensive departure from the faith, not so much the knowledge of the Scriptures (the

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factual knowledge) but the application of it into life. People begin to read the Scriptures to see what they can find and then they change the Scriptures to suit their lives.

The opposite is the way it should be. As we read the Scriptures, we should allow the searchlight of the Scriptures to shine in our souls. We should be ready to make the changes and the alterations that are needed to conform to God's perfect will as

revealed in the Scriptures.

Read 2 Timothy 3:10–17. The first part of this passage talks about the perilous days and the marks of those days in which we live. Notice verse 8. It talks about the “Jannes and Jambres,” that were in conflict with Moses. They resisted truth. Then, in verse 10 there is a “but.” “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life.” Paul is comparing or contrasting his life with the life of these apostates in

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Moses' time. His life is patterned after the Scriptures. He could recommend that people follow his example.

Notice the two components of his life. They knew his doctrine. That is what he believed. They knew his way of life. Belief and life, belief and application always go together. This is important for ordained people especially, but it also a needful element of every Christian's life to be sound in doctrine and in our manner of life. Our manner of life must "line up" with doctrine, that is, with the Word of God.

It is possible to begin to do things because other people do it and in that process not bring ourselves into conformity with the Word of God. We know that in the end the Word of God will be the judge. Not "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18). In the end we will meet the Scriptures as the judge of our lives. Certainly, it is important that we honour the Word of God today and intend to live by it.

Verse 17 says that we "may be perfect." Through the Bible, God is calling us to a life of holiness — not sinless perfection but perfect in motive. In other words we are saved and have the work of Christ that is availing for us. His righteousness becomes our right-

eousness and we are saved and live according to the Word of God.

Notice verse 13. This verse focuses on verses 1–9. I believe it is another mark of the end time. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." Verse 13 is separate from the marks of verses 1–9. I think this is especially emphasizing the religious apostasy in that people. They will be out to deceive. That deception comes through misapplication of the Scriptures. That is in this context of verses 14–17. In our day there are different types of apostasy. There is massive, extensive wickedness — people who do not claim to be saved and Christians. However, probably the greatest threat to us is those that are out to deceive and that teach the Word, but do not teach it in its entirety.

Notice verse 14. We need to know of whom we have learned these things. This is not only speaking of a factual knowledge but it is talking about the applications of life. Those who are applying the Scriptures, be sure that their life and doctrines are in accord with the Word of God.

When we come to church, we are confident that our preacher's message "line up" with the Word of God. We are thankful that in

the Anabaptist heritage it has been that way. That does not say that it is guaranteed to be that way, but we are grateful that the Holy Spirit works through the lives of ordained people and brings a message of truth to the people. Then we need to test that again by the Word of God.

Verse 10 says, “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life.” Verse 13 mentions some other things about Paul’s life. “But. . .” in contrast to that — false teachers — “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. (14) But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; (15) And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (16) All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (17) That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

Notice verse 14 again. It is not only learning the Scriptures for factual knowledge, but it is learning to apply the Scriptures. In our teaching and preaching we

are so much teaching the factual knowledge of the Scriptures. However, with that goes learning in application. We are certainly glad for this. This is one reason we object to the radio because of the deception that is propagated through the air by false teachers. It is not so much, or only what they say but what they do not say. It is something that we need to continue to think about and have conviction against the radio. Also, we need conviction against tapes by Protestant theologians who do not “ring clear” to the Biblical Anabaptist faith and practice. That would have equal threats and dangers to radio preaching.

In Mennonite history many people have been led astray by radio preaching. That is not a threat in our setting but there are other threats that we need to be careful about. We need to apply verse 14 always, “knowing of whom thou hast learned them.” That hinges back to verse 10, “thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life.” We need to evaluate the message — weigh it in light of how people live and the application they are making to that in life.

Notice in verse 15 the value of childhood instruction. Today, in our worship services we have many children, for which we are

glad. We value the impressions that are being made upon the lives, upon the minds of children. Again, it is not only teaching them the factual knowledge but they learn the most about the Scriptures as they look at the life. Again, it is in this context, “fully known my doctrine, manner of life.” Children learn most about the Bible by what they see in the home. “that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures.” It certainly makes it important that parents are this right example. Paul was this right example to the Church. Parents need to be the right example in the home. Children learn their impressions of God from their parents. As the father is, so in a child’s mind God is. That makes it very important that we are Bible believing and practicing parents.

Notice yet again verses 16 and 17. The Word of God is God breathed. It is breathed by God for a specific purpose that it can be profitable for doctrine as to

teach the principles of God for reproof, conviction of sin, for correction, and to redirect the course. If an airplane or a ship is off course only a degree, the further they go the further they will be off course. The Word of God is for redirecting and correcting of the course. That happens in the preaching and the teaching of the Word. It is for instruction, for nurture, that we may be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” That word *furnished* is an interesting word. It means, “complete and ready for service.”

I thought of it like in a house. When a house is fully furnished, there is a kitchen table, beds, and everything that is practical. If you move into the house and that furniture is missing that house is not very useful. The Word completely furnishes our life so that we may live according to His will and move out into Christian service. May the Word of God be that for us.

Avoiding the Hezekiah Mentality — 2 Kings 20:19

The title that has been assigned is “Avoiding the Hezekiah Mentality.” The text that has been assigned is from 2 Kings 20. You may turn there with me. We want to look at a few other thoughts here before

we look at the text. I think we are all familiar with Hezekiah’s life. We are at least somewhat familiar with Hezekiah’s mentality.

I would like first of all look at a couple of words in the title. What are we talking about when

we talk about mentality? I noticed that the program for the minister's Bible study and fellowship at Numidia has a message related to *mission mentality*. Sometimes we talk about *service mentality*. What do we mean when we talk about a mentality? We talk about thought patterns. I think it is closely related to the thought of mentality. The dictionary would say that mentality is, "mental activity." I think that is understood as we think of the word mental is in the thought of mentality. However, it does have the more specific idea in relation to mental activity that there is "a cast or a habit of mind," there when we are thinking about mentality. It is, maybe we would say, a "rut" that we get into in relation to our mental activity. It sometimes is a good rut to get into, but as we are thinking of Hezekiah's mentality it was a rut that he should not have got into. It caused him not to be able to relate to the situation properly.

Maybe in more simple terms we could say it is the way of life. That is what it became for Hezekiah. His mentality became a way of life to him. As we think of all that the Lord blessed him with, we wonder how it was that he got to this kind of a mentality. As I have prepared this, I think we may tend to be a little critical

of Hezekiah. However, I think all of us probably realize and understand that we have the same potential. Therefore, we want to be encouraged in these thoughts.

Before we read the passage, I would like to bring this thought of this Hezekiah mentality right to us. Let us identify a little bit what we have in mind when we talk about avoiding the Hezekiah mentality. Is this something that only was for Hezekiah? Do we have this to relate to today? I think the message indicates that we do need to take stock of our mentality, how we think, and what our habit of mind is in relation to the issues of life.

I have jotted down a few things that I thought would help us to put it into our present experience as we think of this Hezekiah mentality. *We might say it is a short-sighted vision.* Hezekiah was satisfied that everything would be okay in his days. That is shortsightedness. That is a short-sighted vision as we think of all that the Lord would have us be interested in beyond our time and our life. Hezekiah was a little short-sighted that way. We can relate to that. We will notice some thoughts that would identify that kind of a vision.

Another thought I had in relation to this kind of a mentality is that we tend to be satisfied that

as long as I am faithful then as it relates to future generations or my posterity then, it is not really important. Yes I am interested, but I do not sense a responsibility to my posterity or future generations as the Lord carries. Now, we want to be satisfied with our present personal relationship with the Lord. We must be sensing that and we must be having that experience. However, a true, genuine satisfying Christian experience will not be self-centered or short in vision. It will be looking ahead as the Lord carries and blesses.

Therefore, it is more than simply being satisfied with myself and my experience. Rather, it is having a keen interest in others around us as well as our posterity. Closely connected with that is that we are so satisfied with our present experience that we are not, as it were, lending our influence in giving direction to the rising generation. This message, as we look at the setting of this, and the words that came to Hezekiah in relation to this did relate to his family. We will read that after a bit.

We know about his sons being carried away and so on. It can go beyond that, but I think the setting in this text does bring it down to concern and interest in our own families and our chil-

dren. Therefore, it is important. The Hezekiah mentality is not being interested in my influence to that. We understand that if the future generations will be faithful, it does mean that the present generation must be actively giving direction.

Another thought that I thought about in relation to this kind of mentality, we hear the term sometimes called "battle weariness." I think that is maybe another aspect of this mentality. Maybe grandparents face this in a realistic way. It has been a rigorous battle, we might say, to bring the children up. Now, the children are leaving the home and we tend to simply relax and sit back. We have had a hard life. We have had a difficult time and it has been hard work, and we tend to become a bit weary. That could be a mentality that will hinder the future generations from appreciating and accepting the faith, and may even be the influence that will lead them somewhere else. May God help us not to allow that to happen.

That shows us in a nutshell a little bit what we are thinking about when we think about the Hezekiah mentality. It is simply as Hezekiah proclaimed "As long as it is good in my days why should I worry about anything else," (putting it in my own

words).

Before we go on with this, I would like to take a brief review of Hezekiah's life as we have it here in a few chapters in 2 Kings. We sometimes wonder how it is that a person can get to this place in his life when the Lord had blessed him. The Lord had answered prayer. Hezekiah is recorded in his leadership role, as a strong king and beseeching the Lord. I would like to notice of couple of those things to help us see what can happen where someone may have a strong faith in God, a strong relationship with God, but how it is possible that it can be lost. Let us review a few things here.

In 2 Kings 18 first of all. I jotted down here that Hezekiah was bombarded by intimidation. We know that the Assyrians were trying to intimidate Hezekiah. They sent letters. 2 Kings 18:19–22 says “And Rabshakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? (20) Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words,) I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? (21) Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man

lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him. (22) But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?” He continues on and brings more intimidation upon Hezekiah as he took his place.

Then, Hezekiah realized that he did not know what to answer. Therefore, he appealed to Isaiah. Isaiah brought back to him the message from the Lord. We have that in 2 Kings 19. Hezekiah rent his clothes and covered himself after he heard this. He read this letter and all this intimidation and his people were frustrated. However, we read what Hezekiah did in verses 14–16, “And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. (15) And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. (16) LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes,

and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.” Hezekiah realized that in his strength, or in the strength of his people, he was not able to face up to this threat. He went to the Lord, and we say that was a strong constitution that he had in doing that. He plead with the Lord to hear them.

Certainly, God did hear them and in verse 19 he says, “Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.” Hezekiah was not interested in his status or his position to be recognized. Rather, he plead with the Lord that the Lord would show himself strong with His people. We believe the Lord heard that. As I said, Hezekiah did not relate to this situation in his own strength, but he sought the help of the Lord. To me that was a strong platform from which he could relate to the threats of the enemy. It was challenging to me because we all know a little bit what intimidation does to us. It is one of those things that is quite hard to stand up against when someone makes fun of us, or they intimidate us for not having shorts or something like that. They make it look

ridiculous that you would think of going out on the highway without insurance on your vehicle, and so on. That is intimidation. It has a tendency of breaking us down in relation to our trust and faith in God. Hezekiah did not allow that to break him down. He plead for the help of the Lord. I think we understand how that must be in order for the Lord to work through us and His name be exalted in the world to those around us.

Thus, we think of Hezekiah as a strong leader. Most of that was because of his trust and confidence in God. He did not try to exert himself or his energies. He plead the face of God. Then in 2 Kings 19:20, “Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.” We understand that God does not answer us in this way in a verbal way, but by faith we know that God does hear us when we call upon Him in times of struggle. We trust in the living God. God did not allow His name to be blasphemed but God overtook for Hezekiah.

That brings us to chapter 20, and we would say up to this point Hezekiah was strong in His faith in God. He was beseeching the

face of God. If you read the last several verses of chapter 19, we remember the story how the angel of the Lord smote the camp of the Assyrians “an hundred fourscore and five thousand” (2 Kings 19:35). They were all dead corpses when they came to them. God intervened on their behalf. Now, chapter 20 is somewhat a turning point. How much time elapsed through this I am not quite sure. However, it would appear that Hezekiah was maybe a little older. It tells us in the first verse that Hezekiah became sick. I will take the time and read chapter 20. We will draw some of our thoughts from what is given here.

That gives us a brief view of Hezekiah at a very critical time in his life. There were some issues that Hezekiah faced that it seems as though maybe was the turning point in his life as it related to his taking his place as God would have him to do. I would like to look at a few points from here that we have read. *I would like to point out what I call the process that brought Hezekiah to this kind of a mentality.* The Scripture says that Hezekiah became “sick unto death” (2 Kings 20:1). Isaiah came to him and said, “Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.” I am not sure if that means

that the Lord was giving him this warning in light of the fact that there had been some negatives happened here since the Lord had given him such a victory that the challenge comes to “set thine house in order.”

I suppose that is a present challenge. Everyone has a daily experience to set their house in order. “For thou shalt die, and not live.” Nevertheless, in light of the fact that it records this, it could be that the Lord was seeing some changes in Hezekiah’s life and so the Lord presented this challenge. Then, he beseeched the Lord. I do not necessarily say it was wrong for Hezekiah to, in a sense, exploit his good things. He beseeched the Lord to remember how he had walked before Him in truth and “with a perfect heart” (verse 3), and had done that which is good in His sight. I think each of us want that satisfying experience of knowing that the Lord’s blessing is on our life. It seems as though Hezekiah maybe was not quite submitted to God’s will in relation to the end of His life. We believe that part of living for the Lord is that we submit ourselves to God’s overruling hand in our life. If He sees fit to remove us from life’s experiences we must submit ourselves to that. I am not necessarily being critical of Hezekiah at this

point.

However, after the Word of the Lord came back to Him and said, “The Lord will add fifteen years to your life,” then Hezekiah, it seems, showed maybe a lack of trust, confidence, and faith in God, where he asks for a sign. I realize this is Old Testament setting. I also realize that signs and various things took on a different connotation than what we would view it in a New Testament setting. Nevertheless, I wonder if this was not a part of the process of Hezekiah beginning to break down in his zeal for the Lord, and doing the will of the Lord. He said, “What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day” (verse 8)? It seems like there is a little lack of trust there. Isaiah said, “the Lord will show you a special sign. Which do you choose?” Hezekiah chose to have the shadow go down backwards ten degrees. That seems to me is one part of the process that was breaking down Hezekiah which brought him to the mentality that he had.

Then, in verse 12 the king of Babylon sent some letters and a present. He had heard that Hezekiah was sick, and I suppose that was not necessarily evil for Hezekiah to receive that.

However, it does show us that Hezekiah did not quite know how to relate to that. “And Hezekiah hearkened unto them” (verse 13). Not only that but he accommodated. We think of Babylon as a type of the world. He accommodated the world, I would say, in a close association that he had here. He brought them into his house and showed them all that he had. I am not sure what all was involved here in “the house of his precious things.” It could well be that was some of the precious things related to their worship. Hezekiah accommodated to them and showed them all of that. And it seems to me that some of those things were sacred things that should not have been exposed to the world (as it was) to the people of Babylon.

The Scripture says, “there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.” It seems as though Hezekiah had lost his moorings as it related to separation from the evil kingdoms around him. That was a definite command of God that they were not to have close associations with the enemy nations around them. However, Hezekiah, it seems that he simply opened and welcomed with a welcome arm, welcoming them into his setting there. It was not as though he did

not know who they were — “They are come from a far country, even from Babylon” (verse 14). He knew what they represented and he made accommodation to them.

The question that Isaiah asked him, “What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things . . .” (verse 15). I do not know that it was wrong to show that. We do not believe in hiding things, but there does come a place where there is some discretion needed as it relates to the enemy around us, and those people who have no appreciation for the Scriptures or no appreciation for God. We want to be testimonies to them. *However, there are probably some areas, like the precious things, and those things of sacredness that we do not necessarily expose to the people of the world as we do to each other.* There needs to be some discretion used there.

“And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD” (verse 16). God was trying to help Hezekiah see that what he did here was a breakdown as to what the Lord expected him to do in relation to being king of Israel and a leader. “The days will come when all that you have showed them they will carry it away. . .” “nothing shall be

left” (verse 17), and then “of thy sons” (verse 18), and of thy family, we could say, they will be carried away and they will be a part of the “Babylonian system.” It does not seem as though it struck Hezekiah very strongly of what would happen. It seems as though his vision was distorted in relation to his influence on his family and his future generations. He simply said, “Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days” (verse 19)?

The challenge for us is that we understand that the challenge which Hezekiah received here was not only Hezekiah’s experience. I suppose men and women down through the ages have faced the same challenge. I am glad we have some record in the Scriptures of men and women who did not break down as Hezekiah did. We will look at a couple of them.

Avoiding this mentality. I would like for us to think now and ask this question, “*When does this mentality overtake us?*” At what stage in our influence, especially as we think of parents. Fathers and mothers, does this start to happen when we become a grandparent? Does this start to happen when we have teenagers in our homes? I guess as I evalu-

ated that, I think it is a mentality that is a challenge to every one of us — teenagers, middle aged, grandparents, and great grandparents. There is always that challenge that we will break down in relation to our concern and interest in the rising generation.

At one point this mentality was referred to as “Hezekiahism.” An ism is fairly much a belief or a way of life. I trust that it does not overtake us. What if we get to a place where there has been a mentality afloat in the Mennonite church for many years for the young teenagers that is the time when they can take their fling and they do not need to be too serious about life and some of those things? We have instructed and taught against that. We have helped our teenagers to find the importance of their influence to others and their contribution that they can make to the church. I am glad that we have moved away from that kind of mentality. Nevertheless, as the heat of the battle comes on, in our family life and so on, there is always that potential of breaking down in our zeal and in our interest for our families. We will maybe look at a few of those areas as we look at the concluding part of the message — avoiding the mental-

ity.

Some Scriptural examples of those who avoided this mentality. To start with I would like to turn back to what the Bible has to say about Abraham. In Genesis 18, I think we are familiar with this verse, but this is the setting where the Lord was about to pour judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah. Before He did this the Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; (18) Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him” (Genesis 18:17, 18)? Why was the Lord able to say that? It struck me again new as I refreshed on this Scripture. The Lord knew Abraham and said he will “become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.” “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (Genesis 18:19).

I was impressed with that. Abraham was not ready to break down and give up in relation to his responsibility as a father. The Lord said, “I know him, that he will command his children.” *The*

Scripture calls for parental resolve in relation to avoiding this kind of a mentality. When we talk about resolve, we are talking about a commitment. In relation to our Christian life it is a commitment to follow the Lord. We say we will be faithful to the end. This is necessary in order that we do not fall into the Hezekiah mentality. We committed ourselves to the Lord and to the work that is before us in bringing our families “up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

Abraham is a tremendous challenge to us. Remember Abraham was living in the midst of corruption. Sodom and Gomorrah were terribly wicked places. I think Abraham kept himself aloof from that. Nevertheless, there could have easily been influences come to bear on him and his family in that setting.

Another thing we could say here is that Abraham did not simply tell his children, “Now, this is one thing you can do. Over here is something else. Or, you can take it this way.” He did not present mere ideas to his children and then let the final disposition of those things to the children. It says “that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way

of the LORD.” Along the way sometimes in our family experience we tend to think that this thing of commanding is a negative influence, but really it is not. We know that our children are young. They do not understand many things and they need to know what is the way we are charting. They need to understand our desires for them and this thing of commanding them is a present challenge that we need to face. It says that “they shall keep the way of the LORD.”

We know that the carnal nature that we are all born with is bent on following after another way — the way of the devil. If we will have our children, our families, keep the way of the Lord, it will call for some commanding. It is not simply giving them a lot of choices. I would say in later teenage years there is a maybe room for that. Rather, as our children are growing up in those formative years, we need to be like Abraham. We need to command our children.

We could think of Noah as well. The Scriptures do not record Noah’s approach to his family. However, it seems to me in the midst of a corrupt society in which he was living and the fact that he saved his family (they all were brought into the ark) tells me that there was some

work being done in Noah's behalf. Noah took his work seriously. It was not all in building the ark, but it was in saving his family. We ought to keep that in mind as we think of the parental resolve that is necessary in order that we avoid this Hezekiah mentality. It calls for hard work. Any people who have some years and experience in family life, in parenting, know that it calls for some hard work. I would challenge our younger families, and fathers and mothers to not become weary of the work because there is a blessing in being faithful, and leading and directing children.

The thought of Abraham becoming "a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him," shows to us the contribution that Abraham's influence left on the rising generations as the Lord blessed all that. The Scripture says "that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." I think we all want that same blessing, but we will need to be like Abraham and Noah as related to that.

2) *Another aspect of avoiding this mentality is that in our day in age, in the short lifespan that we have, the short time as fathers and mothers that we have to direct our families for the Lord in*

the way of truth, it means that we will need to chart a course that runs counter to the prevailing logic of our day. I do not care what issue you consider in relation to this thought of charting a course that runs counter to the prevailing logic of our day — whether you think of the thought of discipline in the home, or whether you consider the thought of education — how we educate our children, or the kind of church life that we believe is the right kind of church life for our families. I talked about our teenagers. With our young people it is another important thing to chart a course that will run counter to the prevailing logic of our day.

As I said, there is a lot of logic around that young people need to make their own decisions and that they have a right to chart their own course. The Scriptures tell us to bring children "up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). It does not in any way give room for human reasoning to be brought in. Therefore, we believe that there is a right thought in relation to our young people. Teenagers, our young people, do have a place to fill in the home and in the church and they do have a contribution to make. This is in contrast to much of the so-called

self-expression and so on that is prevalent in our society.

We must chart a course. Again, we do not try to do this ourselves but as the body of Christ working together. We are privileged to have that opportunity to help our families. I especially think of this often in relation to our schools. We all believe and understand the need for our schools and our children being separated from the public system and having a system where the Bible is the centre of our educational system. We cannot quite imagine where we would be without that in relation to our families. We know it runs counter to the society's thoughts in relation to education. We talked about a short-sighted vision. We cannot have that. As the Lord tarries, we want to be sure that we are directing in a way and making possible every possible means to have our children taught in the Scriptures.

I asked, "When does this mentality overtake us?" I would like to say for myself. When our children are all through school and we tend maybe to relax a little bit. We do not have that stress every morning of getting the family, the children ready to go to school. Our sisters maybe bear more of that stress of the busy schedule. However, I am

glad that as grandparents we can still make our contribution to the school, whether it is through finances or taking our place in having devotions and so on like that in school. That is part of avoiding the mentality that we simply sit back a bit and relax and let the younger ones take care of it. I think there is work for all of us in that area.

3) *We avoid this mentality in relation to the communication between father and mother.* Now, we do not have any record of Hezekiah's wife being involved in this — the mother of his children and so on. However, as we think of our setting today, we know the importance of father and mother working together and communicating properly and agreeing together on issues that the family faces. If we are not united in our thinking, if we are not giving a united appeal and a united command, we might say, to our families — you know when disharmony and disunity has its effect — many times we have seen the posterity losing their way.

I would lay the burden heavier on our fathers in relation to the challenge of this point of communicating together as mothers and fathers. We must take the leadership role in this. We believe that as we do that (are

faithful in our role) our wives and our mothers will be happy to submit themselves to that. There must be a unified front, we might say, as we endeavour to help our children in relation to this. As we each take our place in communicating properly and agreeing together, it will help us to avoid this mentality. If either one of us, on either side of the house relaxes a bit and does not take their place, there will be a breakdown in communication with our families.

I would encourage especially the families with school children. We all know that it takes some effort to keep after the schedule in relation to having our children ready to go to school in the morning and see that they are picked up at school at the right time and so on. Fathers, let us do our part in helping our wives to see that it all happens. We must be working together in order to avoid this kind of mentality.

4) We must be continually be able to give solid, consistent answers to the questions our young people have for us. In relation to this point it would maybe relate more to our relating to our teenagers in our families, our young people. This point is closely tied in with the thought of communication And maybe there are some challenges that they

bring to us and questions that they need answers for. Are we solidly grounded in the Scriptures and have a Scriptural platform from which to give solid, consistent answers to those questions?

It is one thing to answer the little preschooler. Some of these I remember our smaller children asking, "Where does God live?" and some of those childish questions that sometimes we are not exactly sure how to answer. Yet, in few short words we can often satisfy them. However, when it comes to teenagers bringing questions and challenges we must be able to have a consistent answer to their questions. It is not wrong for young people to have questions. I think of the parent relationship which teenagers should be able to approach. Nevertheless, the thought came to me, maybe we have a teenager who is bringing a challenge in relation to some issue. Are we as parents standing on a solid platform that even before our children, our teenagers come to us with a challenge they know what the answer is before they ask it?

That calls for commitment. It calls for resolve. Again, it is not wrong for those things to come from our teenagers. Do they know that if they bring a chal-

lenge to us it will shake us a little bit? Or, do they know where we stand? Do they understand that we will not break down, and even before they bring a question or a challenge that they know where we are standing? That does not mean that we do not give consideration to their interests. As parents, father and mother need to communicate but there needs to be communication between fathers and mothers and the children. Children learn where we stand in relation to where we come out on issues that the church faces and various other things and children learn that. We say sometimes they learn more by observing than by what we teach. I think that is very true.

Hezekiah was feeling good for himself that he, himself was faithful? He said, "Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?" That is a mentality that will cause us to break down in our contribution, and in our influence on the rising generation if we will simply say, "Well, as long as I keep myself right with the Lord and right with the church why that is all that is needed." Well, that is needed. Our influence on that point is very much needed. However, if that is all we are interested in then we are a bit selfish, are we

not in our interest in others and in the rising generation?

The thought of avoiding this mentality does mean that we need to take some positive steps to keep it from happening. I am glad for a brotherhood, for a body of believers that as we think and work together we can be a tremendous help to each other. We actually make our contribution in relation to the thought patterns that we have. We develop those thought patterns many times because of what others have helped us to think through. It is true on this point as well. May we continue to labour and work. It means we must continue to have a growing concern today because you know down the road there does come a time when we stand before God to give an account as fathers and mothers. That is true as church leaders or whoever. Anyone in responsible roles will give account. May it be that we can give an account with joy both for ourselves, and not only for ourselves but for families and for our children, and for those who come under our influence that there might be salvation received by those who have felt our contribution that they might serve the Lord as well. May the Lord add His blessing.

Moderator’s testimony: The Bible does not say what Isaiah’s answer was when Hezekiah said, “Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?” That question remains. We are supposed to think about it, and in this we have done so. This title was a negative — avoiding. Nevertheless, our brother has given us many positive solutions and remedies for this mentality. They are not solutions that we need to go to college, have a million dollars, or get special tools to do them. We simply need a willingness to go to work, a heart of love, and a heart that is determined to do the will of God. “Teach me O Lord Thy way of truth, And from it I will not depart.”

It did not take long at all for this thing to start happening. Hezekiah’s life was extended fifteen years and then he died.

Then, his son became king when he was twelve. In that fifteen years time that son was born and he was a terrible king — Manasseh. The Scripture tells us in 2 Kings 21, the next chapter, “And he did this . . . and he did this. . . And he did this, and it was so bad that God said “For all these evils this is the end.” It did not take long at all for this Hezekiah mentality to go to seed and to bear fruit. It does not. That is the way it is.

May God help us to learn. There is no need for us to go through this to see how it works. It does work that way. We can look at Abraham and see how to do the other way. May we do so. I am glad to testify that there are Abrahams who are getting the job done and to the glory of God. May God help us to pattern after them.

Scripture References

Genesis	20:8	283	6:4	286, 287
18:17, 18	285	20:12	283	
18:19	285	20:13	283	2 Timothy
2 Kings		20:14	284	3:16
18:19–22	280	20:15	284	3:10
19:14–16	280	20:16	284	3:10–17
19:19	281	20:17, 18	284	3:13
19:20	281	20:19	284	3:14
19:35	282			3:14–17
20:1	282	Matthew		3:16, 17
20:3	282	5:18	275	3:17
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Where There is No Vision, the People Perish

— **Proverbs 29:18**

From a message by Jonathan E. Martin

Sunday, January 14, 1996

Richland Mennonite Church

Where There is No Vision the People Perish

— **Proverbs 29:18**

From a message by Daryl Bair

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Winter Bible School

Antrim Mennonite Church

Book Reprint *(continued)*

The Seven Laws of Teaching

CHAPTER II *(continued)*

THE LAW OF THE TEACHER

9. While knowledge thus thoroughly and familiarly mastered rouses into higher action all the powers of the teacher, it also gives him the command and use of those powers. Instead of a feeling of subservience to his text-book, the teacher who knows his lesson as he ought is at home in his recitation, and can watch the efforts of his class and direct with ease the trend of their thoughts. He is ready to recognize and interpret their first glimpses of truth; to remove the obstacles from their path, and to aid and encourage them.

10. A teacher's ready

and evident knowledge helps to give the pupil needed confidence. We follow with expectation and delight the guide who has a thorough knowledge of the field we wish to explore, but we follow reluctantly and without interest the ignorant and incompetent leader. Children object to being taught by one in whom they have no confidence. And this is not all. The great scholars, the Newtons, the Humboldts, and the Huxleys, kindle public interest in the sciences in which they themselves are working; in the same way the well-prepared teacher awakens in his pupils the active desire to study further. In some

unfortunate cases, great knowledge is unaccompanied by the ability to inspire pupils with a love of study, and this is a condition fatal to successful teaching, especially with young pupils. Better a teacher with limited knowledge but with the power to stimulate his pupils, than an Agassiz without it.

11. Such is the philosophy of this first great law of teaching. Thus understood, it clearly portrays the splendid ideal which no one except the Great Teacher ever fully realized, but which every true teacher must approach. It defines accurately the forces with which the successful teacher must go to his work. From the mother teaching her little child, to the instructor of the most abstract science, the orator addressing senates, and the preacher teaching great congregations, this law knows no exceptions and permits no successful violations. *It affirms everywhere, the teacher must know that which he would teach.*

Rules for Teachers

12. Among the rules which arise out of the Law of the Teacher, the following are the most important:

(1) Prepare each lesson by fresh study. Last year's knowl-

edge has necessarily faded somewhat. Only fresh conceptions inspire us to our best efforts.

(2) Find in the lesson its analogies to more familiar facts and principles. In these lie the illustrations by which it may be taught to others.

(3) Study the lesson until it takes shape in familiar language. The final product of clear thought is clear speech.

(4) Find the natural order of the several steps of the lesson. In every science there is a natural path from the simplest notions to the broadest views; so, too, in every lesson.

(5) Find the relation of the lesson to the lives of the learners. Its practical value lies in these relations.

(6) Use freely all legitimate aids, but never rest until the real understanding is clearly before you.

(7) Bear in mind that complete mastery of a few things is better than an ineffective smattering of many.

(8) Have a definite time for the study of each lesson, in advance of the teaching. All things help the duty done on time. One keeps on learning the lesson studied in advance, and gathers fresh interest and illustrations.

(9) Have a plan of study, but

do not hesitate, when necessary, to study beyond the plan. The best mnemonic device is to ask and answer these questions about the lesson: What? How? Why?

(10) Do not deny yourself the help of good books on the subject of your lessons. Buy, borrow, or beg, if necessary, but obtain somehow the help of the best thinkers, enough at least to stimulate your own thought; but do not read without thinking. If possible, talk the lesson over with an intelligent friend; collision often brings light. In the absence of these aids, write your views; expressing your thoughts in writing may clear them of obscurities.

Violations and Mistakes

13. This discussion would be incomplete without some mention of the frequent violations of the law. The best teacher may spoil his most careful and earnest work by thoughtless blunders. The true teacher will make as few errors as possible, and will profit by those that he makes.

(1) The very ignorance of his pupils may tempt the teacher to neglect careful preparation and study. He may think that in any event he will know much more of the lesson than the pupils can,

and imagine that he will find something to say about it, or that the ignorance will pass unnoticed. A sad mistake, and one that often costs dearly. The cheat is almost sure to be discovered, and from that time the teacher's standing with the class is gone.

(2) Some teachers assume that it is the pupils' work, not theirs, to study the lesson, and that with the aid of the book in hand, they will be able easily to ascertain whether the pupils have done their duty. Better let one of the pupils who knows his lesson examine the others, than to discourage study by your own indifference and lack of preparation. Teaching is not merely "hearing lessons."

(3) Others look hastily through the lesson, and conclude that though they have not thoroughly mastered it, or perhaps any part of it, they have gathered enough to fill the period, and can, if necessary, supplement the little they know with random talk or story. Or, lacking time or heart for any preparation, they dismiss all thought of teaching, fill the hour with such exercises as may occur to them, and hope that, as the school is a good thing anyway, the pupils will receive some benefit from mere attendance.

(4) A more serious fault is that of those who, failing to find stim-

ulation in the lesson, make it a mere framework upon which to hang some fancies of their own.

(5) There is a meaner wrong done by the teacher who seeks to conceal his lazy ignorance with some pompous pretense of learning, hiding his lack of knowledge by an array of high-sounding phrases beyond the comprehension of his pupils, uttering solemn platitudes in a wise tone, or claiming extensive study and profound information which he has not the time to lay properly before them. Who has not seen

these shams practiced upon pupils?

Thus, many teachers go to their work either partly prepared or wholly unprepared. They are like messengers without a message. They lack entirely the power and enthusiasm necessary to produce the fruits which we have a right to look for from their efforts. Let this first fundamental law of teaching be thoroughly obeyed, and our schools will increase in numbers and in usefulness.

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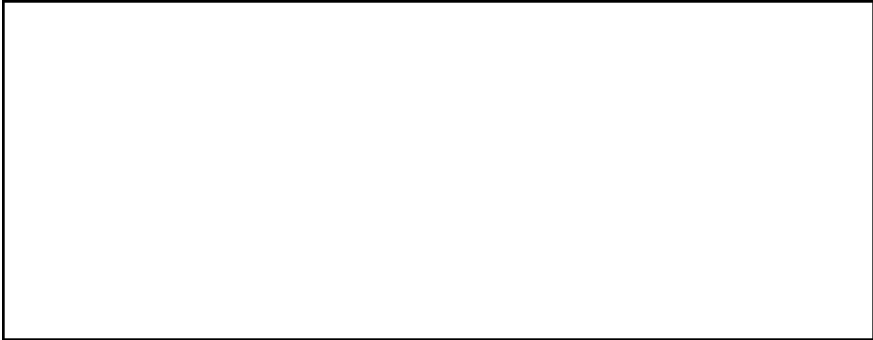
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