

Old Paths

Jeremiah 6:16 “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”

All Scripture is profitable for all generations. So, of course, when we are to seek out the old-time, tested paths, only a fool would think the instruction was intended only for those in the days of Jeremiah's preaching. Jeremiah's advice must have been profitable for Timothy, and likewise will be profitable for us today.

Before I deal with "OLD PATHS," I need to preface them with a few other thoughts.

Paul said for believers to submit themselves to the house of Stephanas for they had addicted themselves to the ministry.

1 Corinthians 16:15 “I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)”

vs. 16 “That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.”

Their life and ministry had earned them the right to be followed. God is big on following great leaders.

We sit in a generation of “do nothings” who want everyone to listen to them criticize those who went before or those who accomplished great things for God. Our generation criticizes the founding fathers and young, foolish preachers likewise criticize the spiritual great founders who gave us the foundation of our churches today.

Paul gave other instruction as to who we should follow;

2 Timothy 3:14 “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;”

Why did Paul encourage Timothy to follow him? Because he knew him well. He had seen his life and ministry; he had seen some serious Christian victories.

vs. 10 “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,”

This was not some youthful "wanna be preacher," but an old grizzled veteran, a man who was proven.

The fact is, in my life "OLD PATHS" mean John Rice, Jack Hyles, Lee Roberson, and others. I know Dwight Moody did not run buses, but I can read how he used wagons to bring people to Sunday school and follow his "OLD PATHS." These old men have proven themselves; we can see the beginning and end of their ministry, and we can rest assured that they are pointing us down the right path. But in Jeremiah we read more -- he said to ask for the old paths.

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We are to look for the paths of those who went before us. Of course, we are to follow Scripture, but since there are ten thousand things I need to do that are not clearly defined in the Bible, I look to the "OLD PATHS" of wiser, successful men who have gone on before. "Ask" for those paths, Jeremiah said. Who can we ask, but older, godly leaders?

But even then, as today, there were some who simply did not want to walk in the old paths. They made excuses; they were so full of self and new ideas that they could not fathom their peers listening to the ideas of older men.

Remember what happened to Rehoboam when he had monumental choices to make? He asked advice of the old men around him, those who had guided his father. I would say that is an old path. But choosing foolishly, he listened to his peers, and the kingdom was split and many lost their lives.

I was brought up in my early Christian life hearing Oliver B. Green, A.V. Henderson, Harold Sighler, G.B. Vick, Lester Roloff, R.G. Lee, but these new kids with their mocking of the "OLD PATHS" just don't impress me. Great men all preached on "OLD PATHS," and I will trust what they said about "OLD PATHS" a lot more than what some rookie who has more followers on Facebook than in his church says.

To seek out the guidance of older, wiser men has ever been the way of the godly;

Deuteronomy 32:7 "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."

Just what is Jeremiah talking about when he said "OLD PATHS?" Read the chapter in context, and you will see. "OLD PATHS" refers to old paths of worship, old paths of morality, old paths of separation from the world. What does this new generation mean when they criticize the term "OLD PATHS?" I don't know, but I would guess it is the "OLD PATHS" they don't like.

Perhaps the OLD PATH is the one of soul winning, or perhaps holiness; most likely it is the one of separation -- for this worldly society is a friend to many in pulpits across America.

Many years ago a friend who had worked in Mexico for a time told me of the flaws in the Spanish Bible. He set out to write a correct Bible. Now he was my friend; we were trained at the same college. But he was crazy. I could look to Elmer Fernandez, Tommy Ashcraft, and other veteran missionaries whose lives were testimony enough for me. Because I do not speak Spanish, I could not order in a Mexican restaurant, but I knew I wanted no part in this new guy who trashed the beliefs of great, older men.

Those who criticize the "OLD PATHS" politically sit in criticism of our nation's constitution. They criticize the founders; they attack everything our nation was built upon. No, I do not want us to go back to using a quill and ink well, nor do I want to wear powdered pony tails, but we all agree -- the values and belief system of the founders is what we want.

We feel the same regarding the truth of spiritual old paths. We want to borrow the lessons learned by older, wiser men, as far back as we can get them. Do not be so foolish as to let someone mock "OLD PATHS" while offering you new alternatives. The contemporary church and the compromiser in the pulpit wants to make the world comfortable in their services hoping to gain a crowd. I prefer the OLD PATH of soul winning. It has been working in California for me and many others for decades.

Most who avoid the OLD PATHS can be identified by their fruit. See how many young men are called to the ministry under their leadership. They may gain the support of a crowd by their flowery teaching, but young men can see a fraud. See the number of soul winners in their church. Count the number of teachers and workers they have developed under their ministry and see if they have built mature growing believers.

If you want to define "OLD PATHS," I suggest you go to some old men and let them set you straight. If you hear someone today criticize what older, successful preachers said about "OLD PATHS," I advise you to avoid his ideas. Give me the Old-Time Religion.

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