

Blue John Preaching

By Connie W. Adams

In recent years I have taken to drinking skim milk, something I would never have thought of doing during my younger years. Back then such milk was considered fit only for the pigs. We called it "blue John." All the good stuff was removed.

I believe we have too much "blue John" preaching. We have extracted anything which might possibly offend or mess up someone's "self-esteem." We have deleted doctrinal teaching with any teeth for fear that our denominational friends might get the idea that we think they are wrong and need to change. We have watered sin down to the point where it does not seem so bad after all. We must not be judgmental. Anything but that!

Even our nation is divided over whether or not it is as bad to lie under oath about immoral behavior as it would be on other things. There are congregations that have never practiced corrective discipline on the disorderly. Well, maybe we will just leave their name off the next directory. Some discipline! We have had to strip away preaching that identifies error among brethren and goes so far as to name those who have promoted it.

I hope you understand that the "we" of this article is used accomodatively and is not meant to indicate that every single preacher has succumbed to "blue John" preaching. Could that be more "poetic license?" By the way, who issues these licenses? "Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay" (James 5:12).

Should We Let The Kids "Decide For Themselves?"

Occasionally we hear parents who say that they don't want to force religion on their children. These misguided folks think they are doing their kids a favor by letting them "decide for themselves." They're afraid that there will be some resentment in the children later if religion has been "crammed down their throats."

If we may we be absolutely blunt in response, that is one of the most ridiculous ideas anyone ever suggested! We force many things on our children. We insist that that they bathe, brush their teeth, change their clothes, etc. We "cram" education down their throats by making them attend school regularly. We demand that they do their homework. We force them to eat good food, get adequate rest, and do other things that are important to their health and development. We do all of this because we know it is in their best interest. And, we do it even when the kids don't like it. Why is it that this common sense approach is neglected by parents who are determined to "let the kids decide for themselves" when it comes to religion?

Dr. James Dobson writes: "There is a critical period when certain kinds of instruction are easier in the life of children. There is a brief period during childhood when youngsters are vulnerable to religious training. Their concepts of right and wrong are formulated during this time, and their view of God begins to solidify. The opportunity of that period must be seized when it is available. The absence or misapplication of instruction through that prime-time period may place a severe limitation on the depth of the child's later devotion to God. When parents withhold indoctrination from their small children, allowing them to "decide for themselves," the adults are almost guaranteeing that their youngsters will "decide" in the negative."

God's word has always taught us the truth on this subject: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). (Greg Gwin)

Crumpled

A well-known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill. In the room of 200, he asked, "Who would like this \$20 bill?" Hands started going up.

He said, "I am going to give this \$20 to one of you but first, let me do this." He proceeded to crumple the dollar bill up. He then asked, "Who still wants it?" Still the hands were up in the air.

"Well," he replied, "What if I do this?" And he dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now all crumpled and dirty. "Now who still wants it?" Still the hands went into the air.

"My friends, you have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$20. Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value. Dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless."

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace..." (Eph. 1:7).

"Are You Jesus?"

One day, the mother of a handicapped little boy sent him to the grocery store. With his arms loaded and obviously struggling with his burdens, he pushed the door open with his back. Suddenly, a man came rushing by and knocked him to the ground. Of course, his groceries went everywhere with the eggs and glass breaking. The man very rudely said, "Just stand in the way, boy."

About that time another gentleman who had witnessed the event went into the store and purchased the broken items. Upon his return he helped the boy pick up what was left. He put them into his automobile and drove him home. As they were about to arrive home, the boy asked, "Mister, are you Jesus?" Who would not be touched by such a story. Who among us does not value the beauty of genuine service? It was our Lord who said, "Whoever would be greatest among you, let him be your servant" (Gospel Advocate).

Jumping to Conclusions

A floor manager in a department store overheard a clerk say to a customer, "No, we haven't had any for a while. I don't know when we will get some." The floor manager rushed over waving the clerk aside angrily. "I can assure you, madam," the manager told the customer, that a new supply is on order. There's been some delay at the warehouse, but we'll have it the next time you come in." The customer gave him a surprised look and left the store.

"Now," the manager said, turning to the clerk, "Don't ever, EVER let me hear you tell a customer we're out of something and you don't know when we'll get some more. If we don't have it, tell them it's on order. What was she talking about anyhow?" The clerk, keeping a straight face, replied: "Rain."

A Moments Wisdom

- If you command wisely, you'll be obeyed cheerfully.
- Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.
- Learn to hold loosely all that is not eternal.
- Work spares us from three evils: boredom, vice, and need.
- Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed.