



(Luke 15:17). Many people come to a point where they realize they have made a mistake by trying to be like others—but pride prevents them from changing. Even if we never come to the point of regret in this life, one day we certainly will. In Jesus’s account of the rich man and Lazarus, after death the wicked rich man wanted to do anything he could to reverse the consequences of his choices, but he could not

(Luke 16:27-28).

would ultimately regret this choice. He warned, **“And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day”** (1 Sam. 8:18). In Jesus’s parable of a rebellious son who demanded his inheritance only to waste it in sinful living, he ultimately found himself starving and longing to eat the food given to the pigs. In this sad state, Jesus said that he, **“came to himself”**

In spite of all these consequences, sometimes we still choose to be like those around us. Even after the Lord’s warnings, the Israelites said, **“No, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles”** (1 Sam. 8:19b-20). They were stubborn! They were headstrong! And the Lord allowed them to make their own choices and reap the consequences of their own sins. It is the same with us. When we choose to **“be like all the nations”** God will not prevent us from making such foolish choices, but there will be serious consequences that come from rejecting God’s reign over our lives.



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ISSUE

22.14

April 5, 2020

Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF
THE OL-
SEN PARK
CHURCH OF
CHRIST

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon

Ryan Ferguson

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Justin Smiley

Kevin Wise

Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

“Like All the Nations”

By Kyle Pope

When Samuel grew old and appointed his sons as judges, their dishonesty and perversion of justice led the Israelite elders to reject the system of Divine rule through judges that first governed the nation and demand king (1 Sam. 8:1-6). In this appeal they expressed a desire that has plagued God’s people throughout the ages. They insisted, **“make us a king to judge us like all the nations”** (1 Sam. 8:5b, NKJV). It wasn’t just that they wanted a king—they specifically pointed out that this was what **“all the nations”** did. It takes brave souls to stand against the crowd and be what is right regardless of how different we may appear. Yet, far too often we suffer from the same problem of wanting to be like those around us. Let’s consider some ways that we must take care that we don’t possess this same attitude.

Ways We Want to Be Like Others

We first face this very early in life. We see that our friends at school get to do things our parents won’t let us do. They talk in ways that make them look grown up and respected by others. They wear the latest fashions that make others notice and envy their bodies and their money. They have lots of friends and we want to be like them.

As we grow older, the problem doesn’t stop. We have co-workers that seem to live lives with much greater freedom than we enjoy. They do whatever they want, go wherever they want, and seem to be able to relax and experience the best of life in ways we feel that are denied to us because of our faith. We see non-Christians living lives without restrictions. Sometimes this leads us to imagine they live without bur-

dens as everything always seems to go their way. So, once again, we want to be like they are.

Even in matters of faith, we can easily look at a world of large booming churches with members who seem to be energetic and excited. Their services seem to offer content that enthralls those in attendance, moves their emotion, and keeps them captivated. If our efforts don't feel as tangible or popular, we imagine that the answer is to do what they do. In this, we let ourselves overlook unscriptural practices—we want to be like them.

What It Means When We Want to Be Like Others

1. We Fail to Appreciate What We Have in Serving God. When the Israelites demanded a king, they actually already had one—God. They just failed to recognize Him. When Samuel prayed to God and He told him to do as the people requested, God said, **“they have not rejected**

you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them” (1 Sam. 8:7b). In the first period of their history, the nation was unique. They were free to serve God without the yoke of servitude to a human king. Ironically, they had been freed from their bondage to Pharaoh, but then chose again to be enslaved. Christians often do the same thing. Having been set free from sin, we often choose to return to the slavery of sin. Paul explained, **“But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered”** (Rom. 6:17).

2. It Is a Reflection of Idolatry. After telling Samuel that their request for a king was a rejection of Him, God goes on to say, **“According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also”** (1 Sam. 8:8). The Lord says that in asking for a king they were actually doing what they had done all along—serving other gods. When we want to be like those around us, we are wanting to serve other gods! James wrote, **“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God”** (Jas. 4:4).

Consequences of Being Like Others

1. It Influences Those Close to Us. God warned the people about the consequences that would come from their choice to have a king. He said, **“This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots”** (1 Sam. 8:11), adding also **“He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers”** (1 Sam. 8:13). They probably didn't realize this when they demanded a king. It wouldn't just affect them, it would change the generations to come. If we give in to our desire to be like the world it won't just affect us—it will affect our family, friends, spouse,

children, and grandchildren. They will either say in their hearts, **“Dad always worships God”**—**“Mom believes in following the Bible”** or **“Dad doesn't think worship is important”** or **“Mom doesn't think you need to follow the Bible.”** Christians are to be **“salt”** and **“light”** exerting an influence on the world around us that brings glory to God (Matt. 5:13-16). When we feel drawn to be like others, we should ask ourselves, **“How would I feel about my children being like others?”** or **“Would I want my grandchildren to be like them?”**

2. It's Never What We Expect It to Be. The Israelites imagined that a king (unlike Samuel's wicked sons) would **“judge us and go out before us and fight our battles”** (1 Sam. 8:20). In reality, God told them, **“He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots”** (1 Sam. 8:12). They thought a king would be their servant. They didn't realize that they would become his servants! We are often blind to the reality of what life is really like on the other side. Like the prodigal son, the lying promises of an unrestrained life never brings the joy and pleasures we imagine (Luke 15:12-16).

3. We Are Forced to Surrender Things We Didn't Anticipate. God warned that when they had a king:

... he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work (1 Sam. 8:14-16).

In choosing to be like **“all the nations”** the Israelites would be forced to give up some of their possessions. When we make the same choice, we will be forced to surrender our values, our hopes, or our priorities. Nothing is ever attained without sacrifice. If I decide that I want to stop doing what the Lord wants and be like the world I sacrifice a relationship with God, and perhaps the respect of those

who continue to serve Him. I knew a preacher years ago who threw away his faith and his family for another woman. In the years after this, as the **“dust settled,”** his wife gave me a nice set of books from his preaching library. Ironically, something he once would have valued was not only surrendered but no longer of any value to him.

4. It Makes Us Do Things We Wouldn't Otherwise. God warned them, **“He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants”** (1 Sam. 8:17). Jesus taught, **“whoever commits sin is a slave of sin”** (John 8:34b). Do we imagine that the woman who aborts her child because of pregnancy from fornication wanted to do that when she first chose to sin? Did the addict who loses his job, home, and family want such things when he took his first hit? Does the adulterer, or unscriptural divorcee want to stand before a judge bartering over time to spend with his or her own children? No. But, the choices we make to first turn away from God to look like the world will ultimately force us to do things we never imagined we would do.

5. Someday, We Will Regret It. Although God allowed the people to have a king, He warned that they



Olsen Park Church of Christ