

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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40 Days of Purpose: Worship and Witnessing

Jerry Fite

Many of our religious neighbors are currently engaged in the 40 Days of Purpose program based upon the book, **The Purpose Driven Life** by Rick Warren. The book speaks about “worship” and “witnessing” that makes one wonder if lives are being transformed by God’s will or by an agenda of man.

During the 40 days, people are taught that worship is to please God. This is good. For example, on day 10 one learns that the “heart of worship” is “self-surrender”. It is our spiritual service to offer ourselves as a spiritual sacrifice unto God (*Romans 12:1*). On day 13, one is reminded that “*worship must be based upon the truth of Scripture, not our opinions about God*” (p.101). Based upon John 4:23-24, Mr. Warren reminds the 40 Days participant that worshiping God “*in truth*” means to worship Him according to how He “*is revealed*”.

While these points keeping one close to revealed truth as a standard for pleasing worship serve as a beaming beacon, below the surface lies an agenda that is

neither self-surrendering nor scriptural. Nowhere in the supposedly scriptural 40 days of transformation is the reader introduced to the fact that God has changed the law under which we serve him today. The Law has been changed, or Jesus can not serve us today as our High Priest (*Hebrews 7:11-14*). Under God’s new covenant established by Jesus Christ, He has revealed the worship that pleases Him. Christians humbly pray; cheerfully sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs; purposely give as their God has prospered them; thoughtfully partake of the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week; and obediently hear God’s word proclaimed (*Acts 2:41, Eph. 5:19, 1 Cor. 16:1-2, Acts 20:7*).

Instead of honoring God’s purpose for us today as revealed in the New Testament, and following through with the concept of “self-surrender”, the 40 Days participant learns that such things as “dancing”, “shouting” “playing instruments of music” are mere styles of worship. The only guideline as to which style to pick is the one that “*authentically represents your love for God, based upon the background and personality God gave you*” (p.102). Instead of sur-

rendering self to worship as God has revealed in the New Testament, you pick a form of worship that pleases you.

In the religious world today “witnessing” has been broadened from its limited use in the New Testament depicting those who were literal “eye witnesses” of Jesus’ resurrection (*Acts 10:41*), and those “martyred” for the cause of Christ (*Rev.2:13*) unto giving one’s personal “testimony” as to what God has done for them. Mr. Warren believes that on six different occasions (*Acts 22-26*) Paul gave his personal story instead of quoting Scripture because “*people who won’t accept the authority of the Bible, will listen to a humble, personal story.*” (p. 291).

On these occasions, Paul was defending his personal actions, so he told his personal story. A closer examination of these accounts presented by Mr. Warren reveals Paul persuading listeners to become Christians based upon the authority of the Scriptures, not his life apart from Scripture (*Acts 24:24-25, 26:22-29*).