

**all our conduct must be determined, not by good and evil, but by the life within ~ NEE - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 200**

.....One of the most serious misconceptions among the children of God is that actions are determined by right and wrong. They do what their eyes tell them is right: they do what their background tells them is right: they do what their years of experience tell them is right. For a Christian, every decision should be based on the inner life, and that is something to tally different from all else. I yearn that you should come to see that a Christian should arrive at no decision other than that which is dictated by life. If the life within you rises to do a thing, then it is right for you to do it: if the life within shrinks back when you advance, then you should immediately call a halt.

I can recall going to a certain place where the brothers were working to real effect. God was truly using them. If you were to ask: Was their work perfect? I should have to answer, No, there was lots of room for improvement. In great humility, they asked me to point out anything I saw that was not correct, so I pointed out this and that. But no change took place. Was I annoyed? Not at all. I could only indicate external matters that called for adjustment: I could not see what God was doing inwardly, and it would have been folly on my part to touch that. I dared not advise God what to do in their lives.

In another place I visited, the brothers were not preaching the gospel. They discussed the matter with me and asked if I did not think they ought to be doing so. "Doctrinally you certainly ought," I answered. They admitted that they felt the same, but the surprising thing was that God did not give them the life to do so. Under such circumstances, if we know God, we can only stand aside in silence, for our pathway is governed by His life alone, not by right and wrong. Brothers and Sisters, the contrast between these two principles of life is immense. So many people are still questioning: "Is it right for me to do this? Would it be wrong for me to do that?" The one question for the Christian to ask is, Does the divine life within me rise or fall when I contemplate this thing? The reaction of the divine life within me must determine the course I follow at every point. This is a heart matter.

"Hear Him"

On the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses was present, representing the law; and Elijah was present, representing the prophets. The legal standard was there; and the prophetic standard was there too: but the two who throughout the Old Testament dispensation were qualified to speak were put to silence by God-- "This is my beloved Son"; He said, "hear ye Him." Today the standard for the Christian is neither the law nor the prophets; it is Christ, the Christ Who dwells within us: therefore the question is not, Am I right or am I wrong? but, Does the divine life in me acquiesce to this? We shall often find that what we ourselves approve, the life within us disapproves. When that is so, we cannot do what we thought right.

The Divine Life Must Be Satisfied

I recall a story of two brothers who both cultivated paddy fields. Their fields were half way up the hill: others were lower down. In the great heat, they drew water by day and went to sleep at night. One night, while they were sleeping, the farmers lower down the hill dug a hole in the irrigation channel surrounding the brothers' fields and let all the water flow down on their own fields. Next morning the brothers saw what had happened, but said nothing. Again, they filled the troughs with water, and again all the water was drawn off the following night. Still no word of protest was uttered when the next day dawned and they discovered what a mean trick the same farmers had played on them. Were they not Christians? Ought not Christians be patient? This game was repeated seven nights in succession, and for seven days in succession, these two brothers silently suffered the wrong. One would have thought that Christians who could allow themselves to be treated like that day after day, and never utter a word of reproach, would surely be overflowing with joy. Strange to say, they were not happy at all, and their unhappiness distressed them to such an extent that they brought the matter to a brother who was in the Lord's service. Having stated their case, they asked him: "How does it come about that, having suffered all this wrong for a full week, we are still unhappy?" This brother had some experience and he replied: "You're unhappy because you've not gone the full length. You should first irrigate those farmers' fields and then irrigate your own. You go back and test it out, and see whether or not your hearts find rest." They agreed to try, and off they went. Next morning they were afoot earlier than ever, and their first business was to irrigate the fields of those farmers who had so persistently robbed their fields of water. And this amazing thing happened--the more they labored on their persecutors' land, the happier they became. By the time they had finished watering their own land their hearts were at perfect rest. When the brothers had repeated this for two or three days, the farmers called to apologize and added: "If this is Christianity, then we want to hear more about it."

Here we see the difference between the principle of right and wrong and the principle of life. Those two brothers had been most patient: was that not right? They had labored in the intense heat to irrigate their paddy fields and without a word of complaint had suffered others to steal their water: was that not very good? What then was lacking that they had no peace of heart? They had done what was right: they had done all that man could require of them: but God was not satisfied. They had no peace of heart because they had not met the demands of His life. When they conformed to His standard, joy and peace welled up in their hearts. The demands of the divine life must be met, so we dare not stop short of God's satisfaction.

What is the Sermon on the Mount? What is taught us in Matthew chapters 5-7? Is it not this, that we dare not be satisfied with anything less than that which meets the demands of the life that God has put within us? The Sermon on the Mount does not teach that, provided we do what is right, then all is well. Man would say: If anyone smites you on the one cheek, why present the other? Surely you have attained the utmost degree of forbearance if you take such an offense without retort. But God says otherwise. If, when you are smitten on the one cheek, you do no more than bow your head and depart, you will find that the inner life will not be satisfied. There will be no inner satisfaction till you turn the other cheek to the smiter for the same treatment. To do so will prove that there is no resentment within. That is the way of life.

Many people say that Matthew 5-7 is too difficult; it is beyond us. I admit it is. It is a sheer impossibility. But here is the point--you have an inner life, and that life tells you that unless you do as the Sermon on the Mount requires, you will find no rest. The whole question lies here, are you walking in the way of life or in the way of good and evil?

Sometimes a brother acts very foolishly. You feel his actions call for strong exhortation or even serious reproof, so one day you set out for his home. Yes, you must give him a good talking-to: that is only right: he has been very wrong. You reach the door: you raise your hand to the doorbell: just as you are about to ring, your hand falls limp by your side. But, you ask, isn't it right to talk to him? The question is not whether it's right to talk to him, but whether the divine life within you allows you to do so. You may exhort that brother, and he may receive your exhortation with courtesy and promise to do what God says, but the more you preach to him the more the life within you wilts. When you return home you will have to admit, I have done wrong.

One day I met a needy brother. He was extremely poor and there was no prospect of help coming to him from any direction, so I thought I certainly must do something for him. Just at that point, I myself had no superabundance, so it was at great sacrifice that I came to his aid. I should have been full of joy when I parted with my much-needed money, but the reverse within said: You were not acting in life; you were just acting on the ground of natural kindness and responding to human need. God did not ask that of you. When I reached home, I had to confess my sin and ask His forgiveness.

#### Our Actions Must Be Controlled By Life

Brothers and Sisters, let me repeat that all our conduct must be determined, not by good and evil, but by the life within. If you act apart from the requirement of that life, even if what you do is good, you will meet with the divine reproof. We need to discern between life and death. If what I have done has sapped my inner life, however good the deed may be, I shall have to acknowledge my sin before God and seek His pardon. In I Corinthians 4:4 Paul said; "I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord." It is easy to distinguish between good and evil, but Paul was not governed by good and evil: even when he was unaware of having done anything wrong, he still did not dare affirm that all was right with him: he acknowledged that the Lord was his judge. At the judgment seat it is the Lord Who will judge us, but His life is in us now and is directing our way. For that reason Paul said in II Corinthians 5:7, "We walk by faith, not by sight." We do not come to decisions on the basis of an outward, legal standard, but on the basis of an inner life. It is a fact that the Lord Jesus Christ dwells within the believer, and He is constantly expressing Himself in us, so we must become sensitive to His life and learn to discern what that life is saying. A great change will take place in us when our conduct is no longer governed by the principle of good and evil but only by the principle of life.

**Re: all our conduct must be determined, not by good and evil, but by the life within - posted by narrowpath, on: 2009/7/28 23:22**

Most of the time we still eat this poisoned fruit of the knowledge of good and evil and mistake it for God's counsel. Rarely do I find a brother who truly eats from the tree of life. Adam and Eve were not restricted to eat from the tree of life in Eden before the fall but I am not sure whether they ever tried this fruit. This fruit of the knowledge of good and evil is pleasing to the eye and desirable for gaining wisdom. It promises gain but brings death. Why is this rotten fruit so more attractive than the fruit of the tree of life?

Now it is the tree on which the son died that brings of life. It repulsive and utter foolishness to those who perish but bring eternal life to those who embrace it.

**Re: all our conduct must be determined, not by good and evil, but by the life within - posted by narrowpath, on: 2009/7/28 23:22**

**Re: all our conduct must be determined, not by good and evil, but by the life within - posted by Lordoitagain (), on: 2009/7/28 23:22**

VERY GOOD READING! Thanks for posting! It goes along with what AbideinHim posted about ([http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic\\_id29928&forum45](http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id29928&forum45)) How to determine the will of God - Muller. I've read some of Watchman Nee's writings about the functions of the soul (will, intellect and emotion). Too often, our own knowledge and intellect or our own human emotions govern our decisions instead of the Spirit of God Who speaks only to the spirit of man, and not to the intellect!

Too often I have craved for a well laid out A, B, C plan where I could feel that I was really accomplishing something by following it. May God help me to learn the dependence on Him and the leading of His Spirit that He wants me to learn! He wants to be free to speak to us by His Spirit at any time in any place and see immediate cheerful obedience. Too often we want our intellect involved and we interfere with the working of His Spirit.

THANKS for posting!

**Re: all our conduct must be determined, not by good and evil, but by the life within - posted by nearthecross, on: 2009/7/28 23:22**

I like and agree with a lot that Nee says, but this article has me a bit perplexed. It seems that he is saying that we should give precedence to our feelings rather than the Word of God. Isn't the Word supposed to govern our entire lives? Doesn't God through the apostle Paul admonish us to keep every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5)?

Don't get me wrong; I think much of what Nee said in this article was good. But what particularly troubled me is the story he gave of the poor, needy brother. It seems like he is saying that when we see someone in dire need, such as that brother, we are to wait and then act on what we "feel" we are to do. If we inwardly sense we are to give, we should give. However, the Scriptures command us clearly:

"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" 1 John 3:17

Am I just nitpicking or does someone else see a contradiction here?

**Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2009/7/28 23:22**

"It seems that he is saying that we should give precedence to our feelings rather than the Word of God. Isn't the Word supposed to govern our entire lives? Doesn't God through the apostle Paul admonish us to keep every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5)?"

The main point that Watchman Nee is trying to get across in this article is that as believers we should be led by the Spirit of God and not by our five physical senses or even our natural reasoning. The Word of God says that we are to cast down imaginations (reasonings), because often these natural reasonings are contrary to the will of God. The Holy Spirit h

as been sent by God to lead us into all truth. By the inner witness of the Spirit and the Word of God we can know the will of God. In general, there will be peace within when we are walking in God's will, and there will be a check in the spirit when we are not. (1 John 2:20,27), (John 14:26), (Colossians 3:15), (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Many Christians live their lives by rules and regulations and are putting themselves under the law. The law that a Christian is under is the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus.

Many Christians do not know the difference between spirit and soul, and Nee deals with this extensively in his book "The Spiritual Man". The soul is the mind, will, and emotions, and nowhere is Nee saying that we should be led by our emotions. God has given us His Spirit and His Word to live by.

Mike

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/7/29 3:07**

Quote:

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Mike

I think you answered very good brother, i think also what nee is getting at that some things are good but that does not mean we should enter into them just because they are good. Some things are by the world applauded good, and some things may be very honorable and nice in all ways, and multitudes of believers enter into this thing because it is "good", and yet it was never Gods will or leading for them to do so. And Gods spirit may sometimes lead you to a halt, when other christians are rushing into this "good" thing, and you will be looked upon as strange and uncomfortable in a strange way.

I have been in a meeting where people have been told to stand to "worship" God and the whole setting was as carnal and worldly as can be, I did not stand and every eye turned on me... I did not "feel" lead to stand as i thought the whole setting was contrary to what worship is to me, there where no reverence, no fear of God, just much play and "fun" for men. So in this case, it was "good" to stand, it was for a good cause, it was in a "good" church with "good" doctrines etc. everything was good, except my spirit...

I remember once Art Katz shares a testimony how he drives by a hitchhiker, or several i think, but then he was "arrested" so to speak in the spirit for this one of them and hit the breaks and the car came to a "convulsive stop" i think his words were. And it turned out this one was the one that he would testify about his life to, this one was a jew just as he was... and if he had stopped for any other because it was the "right and good" thing to do, then he had missed Gods purpose, Gods perfect will...

and i believe, for these moments we do not have a verse, we dont have always a scripture to point towards for support, we need to trust the spirit within us, i dont think Art could have pointed you or me to a scripture saying why he did not stop for the others standing by the road or why he stopped for this one, and i am not sure i could point you to a scripture why i would not stand in this meeting, but i have a sense this is the testing of God as much as his leading.

The word is a blessed thing, i believe in study of the word to a degree many would label me crazy, and yet i see the word

not enough in its "book" form to fully lead us in the christian walk, we need no other book or man to tell us what God has said or how we should live our life, but if we are not open to the spirit we will limit us from going further on with God.

I think of the apostles for example, they did not have the NT, when they went out preaching and came some of them to new countries, they could not pick up the bible and say it is written this and this so believe it and live by it, they needed the spirit to be with them, they needed to be lead by the spirit, and as thankful i am to Gods written word, i am afraid i so often substitute knowing God for knowing his word, KP in featured sermon touched upon this and said it much better than me.

anyway, the article i posted in the original post is only half the article, i will post a link to the full one later if anyone is interested.

God bless

**Re: - posted by Lordoitagain (), on: 2009/7/29 12:47**

Quote:  
-----Don't get me wrong; I think much of what Nee said in this article was good. But what particularly troubled me is the story he gave of the poor, needy brother. It seems like he is saying that when we see someone in dire need, such as that brother, we are to wait and then act on what we "feel" we are to do. If we inwardly sense we are to give, we should give. However, the Scriptures command us clearly:

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If a person's motive for not helping a brother in need is selfishness, then 1 John 3:17 condemns him. I believe that what Watchman Nee is pointing out is that we are to be led by the Spirit even in giving to needy people. If I give to a needy person, but God already has other plans about that needy person then I am going by what I see and feel, and obeying my own intellect instead of being led by the Spirit in my giving.

A good scriptural example of this is that in Mark . . . Jesus clearly commands us:

Mark 16:15 ¶ And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Yet in Acts, we find the apostles being forbidden by the Spirit to go to certain places:

Acts 16:6 ¶ ¶ Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

7 ¶ After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

If you continue a study on those regions, you find that later they were evangelized IN GOD'S TIMING.

Sometimes we Americans give to the "poor", so that they can keep their electricity going or their cable TV going . . . while dear brothers and sisters in other countries often go hungry. I was once sitting in a church service where an appeal was being made for a building fund. In the same message the pastor (who was living off the people's tithe) was justifying his own use of money. The Holy Ghost spoke to me and told me to never give sacrificially to ministries that are not living sacrificially.

At places like [www.gfa.org](http://www.gfa.org) and [www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com) you can find REAL needs to give to. The most important thing is to be led by the Holy Ghost in all that we do!

**Re: full article - posted by myexodus (), on: 2009/7/29 15:54**

Brother Christian!

Thank you so much for placing this article here! Our dear Lord has been reinforcing and establishing His wonderful Life in my heart through recently encountering a wonderful book by T. Austin Sparks titled, "We Beheld His Glory" and this so marvelously dovetails with that teaching!

I am delighted and rejoicing once again how He lovingly confirms His Word to us and writes His Truth in our hearts and then shows us as a kind Father that we can trust Him by how He repeats it to us.

May we all continue to grow in grace and the knowledge of Him as He writes His Word in our hearts and establishes His Life, His Light and His Love, that others may desire to know Him, above all else!

\*please put the link to the full article here! I would love to read more.

Thank you!

"May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure!"

Lois

**Re: all our conduct must be determined, not by good and evil, but by the life within - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/7/29 15:54**

(<http://www.eaglevision.com.my/w1two.htm>) Link to full article

**Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2009/7/29 21:18**

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May we all continue to grow in grace and the knowledge of Him as He writes His Word in our hearts and establishes His Life, His Light and His Love, that others may desire to know Him, above all else!"

Sister Lois,

Thank you for sharing with us. The Lord certainly does confirm His word to us and gives us meat in due season. I have received much from Brother Sparks and Nee. Watchman Nee writes of the revelation that Brother Sparks had concerning the Church in his book "Revive Thy Work." I know that Watchman Nee visited with Brother Sparks in England. I would have liked to have been a fly on the wall. ;-)

Mike