Pillars of the Truth

Article #22

*Courageous Christians Say “No!”*

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In this day of compromise, degeneracy, immorality, license, rebellion, and situation ethics, the respect for the absolute biblical standard of ethics and moral conduct is coming under increasing, relentless attack. If the child of God is to go to heaven, he must live a life of conformity to the challenging, lofty Word of God (through God’s help, providence, and grace) and of nonconformity to the world (Rom. 6:1-5; 12:1-2). It is the faithful unto death who will be crowned (Rev. 2:10). Faithfulness demands the ability to say “NO!” The number of homes destroyed, of prison inmates, of lives ruined, of congregations weakened is steadily increasing. Those who would go to heaven must develop strong uncompromising character.

**SOME BIBLICAL CHARACTERS NOT HAVING THIS COURAGE**. For our example, the Holy Spirit recorded numerous biblical characters who were not strong enough to say “NO!” Adam and Eve were too weak to say “NO” to the forbidden fruit; they said “yes” to Satan’s temptation (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-14), bringing suffering and death unto the world (1 Cor. 15:22). Note the warning in 2 Corinthians 11:1-3. The Israelites refused to say “no” to lusts in the wilderness; thus, they perished before reaching the promised land (1 Cor. 10:1-12). Think of the ruin and suffering which came to and stalked David when he did not say “no” to fleshly lust and temptation (2 Sam. 11:2ff), as well as the wise man, Solomon, who became a ruined fool (1 Kin. 11:1-11), losing his very kingdom.

**OTHERS POSSESSED GREAT COURAGE**. For our encouragement, the Holy Spirit revealed a number of godly men and women who had the courage to say “No.” Refusing to be conformed to the world, Vashti said “No” to immodesty in dress (though it cost her the queenship) (Est. 1:1-22), Joseph said “No” to the advances of Potiphar’s wife (though it cost him his freedom) (Gen. 39:7-23), Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Dan. 1:7) said “No” to bowing down before the golden image (though the punishment was the burning fiery furnace) (Dan. 3:1- 27), Daniel said “No” to the prohibition to pray to God (though the penalty was to be thrown into the lion’s den) (Dan. 6:4-24), the apostles said “No” to the command not to preach the word (though it meant a beating by the Sanhedrin and possible death) (Acts 5:27-29; 40-42), and Paul said “No” to the demands not to preach the whole counsel of God (though it meant being counted an enemy and being persecuted, even by brethren) (Acts 20:23-27; Gal. 4:16).

 **“Rise up, O men of God!”** Equip and fortify yourselves in moral and doctrinal purity (1 Cor. 16:13; 2 Cor. 13:5).