

## **ENDORSEMENT**

As the political arena begins to heat up in anticipation of the 2008 national election, different candidates will be seeking the endorsement of prominent individuals, groups, and newspapers. The candidates do so in order to persuade the less convinced that they are the best candidate for a particular office. In effect they are saying, "If the *so-and-so* family *is endorsing* me, that *says something about* my *qualifications*." Or, "Since the POPULAR NEWSPAPER endorses me, you *know I'm right* on the *issues* of the day."

The same type of thing happens in religion. If a no-name preacher or Bible class teacher takes a position on a given Bible doctrine, he feels secure in that position if Mr. Big Name Preacher himself endorses the doctrine. That just lends all the credibility anyone would need for a questionable doctrine or practice.

The concept of endorsement is not foreign to the scriptures. You will recall from Acts 9:26-27 that there were those in the church in Jerusalem who were afraid of Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor of the New Testament church. Barnabas personally brought Saul before the apostles and declared unto them how that with boldness Saul had preached in Damascus in the name of Jesus. Only then was Saul accepted by the members of the church in Jerusalem. The word of Barnabas made the difference in Saul being accepted freely and without reservation by the Christians in Jerusalem. The name and reputation of Barnabas ("*son of consolation*", Acts 4:36) was the key to Saul's work being launched in Christianity. You see, once the brethren were convinced of Saul's validity, they sent him on his way preaching to Tarsus (Acts 9:30).

Even today we rely heavily on endorsement before we will begin sending financial support to evangelists in other places. We depend on the word of brethren in other places before we send benevolence to a needy saint or congregation somewhere.

You may be called upon to endorse a given individual, situation, a particular practice, or doctrine. Your good name and reputation may make the difference in someone being accepted or rejected. That carries a tremendous responsibility. The New Testament teaches us that endorsing that which is unscriptural means the loss of our soul's salvation (II John 10-11). It is vital that when we are called upon to approve a situation, an individual, a doctrine, or practice that we are certain that the doctrine of Jesus, His teaching, authenticates such. The inspired apostle John said in 2 John 1:9-11, "Anyone who goes too far and *does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.*"

Being called upon for an endorsement makes two assertions: (1) That you are honorable, respectable and conduct yourself accordingly; (2) That you have sufficient knowledge to make a wise decision and an intellectual accurate evaluation of people, doctrines, and situations. A degree of responsibility inheres in an endorsement. If we give our approval to a purveyor of false doctrine, we share in his damnation because others will believe because we have said this preacher, this practice, this doctrine, this situation is sound and underwritten by scripture. In Christianity, just being "a good ole boy" will not wash! If there's a situation, if there's a practice, if there's a doctrine, if there's a preacher we are called upon to give our endorsement to and we know of anything unscriptural about such, we must have the backbone to refuse endorsement even if it means disaster or ruin may come to the matter or person(s) in question. The writer of Proverbs said, "*Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy*" (27:5-6).

When it comes to doctrine, we must know whereof we speak. Such demands diligent study on our part. "*But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with*

*gentleness and reverence*" (1 Peter 3:15). Know what you believe and believe what you know! When we are called upon for an endorsement, doing so may mean that we become unpopular. I saw a bumper sticker on a car whose message was that being "Pro-Life" was not smart if you wanted to satisfy the lust of the flesh with just anybody. We need the courage to stand tall against murdering the unborn, whether by ingesting a pill or with a sharp instrument. Have the courage to endorse that which is righteous. The Corinthians, whose sordid past was horrendous, were admonished by the apostle Paul, "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord*" (1 Cor. 15:58).

Suppose Barnabas had been unwilling to stand up for the man who had wreaked havoc with the churches of Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria (Acts 9:31). Barnabas was willing to stand with Saul and allay all the fears of brethren throughout the aforementioned areas. Can you imagine the consequence of refusing to identify with Saul? Oh, of course God could have accomplished the endorsement of Saul through someone else. Think of the displeasure of God in Barnabas had he refused to give his endorsement to Saul. The success of THAT MOMENT and upon THAT OCCASION hinged on the willingness of Barnabas to stand up and be counted. Does the gospel's success in Surprise, the Sun Cities, Peoria, Glendale, or wherever you live or work depend on your endorsement?

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