



The Camden Companion

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"Come let us reason together says the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18)

Looking Out For Number 1

The concept of looking out for self really became popular back in the 1960's when the "ME" generation was growing up but it has been around for centuries. In fact, the idea of protecting ourselves goes back to Adam and Eve.

In Genesis 3: 7-8, after Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened. They became self-conscious. Notice in the text that they each made their own coverings because they became aware of self. Adam's reply to God after hiding was "I was afraid..." not "we were afraid." During the rest of chapter 3 everyone begins blaming others instead of taking responsibility for their own actions. Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent but each was held accountable to God for their own actions.

Today, the same game is played by all of us to one degree or another. If someone makes a point they are being dogmatic but if we do, we are just being sure of ourselves. If a discussion is going on the other party is being dogmatic while we are just trying to make a point. The other guy is stubborn but we are just being confident. Someone else is a spend-thrift but we are being judical. It's all about self for us. We haven't really ventured far from the garden of Eden in this have we?

IS GOD TWO-FACED?

Part 1

Many have a hard time seeing that God has 2 reactions to our conduct. We read in Romans 11:22, "*Behold the goodness and severity of God: on them that fell, severity: but to you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness, otherwise you will be cut off.*" God reacts with kindness when we serve Him but will react with severity if we disobey. This should surprise no one.

"If you do well shall you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door" (Gen 4:7.) From the beginning, the principle has been clear. When God speaks, and we obey, we are accepted but if not trouble comes our way. Notice the choice Israel was given in Deut. 11:26-28. It was a blessing or a curse based on their keeping the commands of God.

This principle has always been in effect and continues to this day. Under Christ the choice is clear. *"Except you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins"* (John 8:24.) Jesus said believe or die - - it was that simple. The whole road to salvation is spelled out in clear terms. Repent or perish (Luke 13:3); confess or don't be confessed (Matt. 10:32); be baptized and be saved or don't and be condemned (Mark 16:16.) Why does the religious world make this so complicated?

Sometimes we emphasize one side or the other of God. Either we spend our time talking about the warnings and punishments of God or all we want to talk about is the love and goodness of God. To do such is to present a distorted view of God's nature and there needs to be balance here. The love of God must be published everywhere or else men might fear God without knowing to return to his wonderful love. But the opposite is just as true. We must talk about the severity of God or else men will never be motivated to keep His commands.