

ONLY A STEP

In the beautiful song, “Only A Step,” we sing the wonderful message that with one step, an individual can change his life forever. It has been stated, in many ways, “you can do anything that you want, if you only put your mind to doing it.” Paul, by inspiration, states, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phi. 4:13). Nehemiah was saddened by the fact that Jerusalem lie in waste. He received permission from the King to travel to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall around the city. Nehemiah addressed his brethren, “Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work” (Neh. 2:17-18). With a little encouragement, the people made preparations to take on this mighty task and they accomplished this goal because “the people had a mind to work” (Neh. 4:6).

With “only a step,” a sinner can respond to the Lord’s invitation, obey God’s plan of salvation, and put on Christ in water baptism (cf. Rom. 10:17; John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; Rev. 2:10). With “only a step,” an unfaithful Christian can be forgiven of his sin(s) and be welcomed back into fellowship with God (1 John 1:6-9). With “only a step,” a Christian can plant the seed that leads a friend, co-worker, or neighbor to obey the Gospel (Luke 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:6). Sadly, many refuse to take that first step. There are many snares that stand in the way of individuals taking that most important first step. Here are a few.

1. FEAR

Fear is a very powerful motivator. Proper fear (that is reverence for God and His Laws) will lead man to salvation. “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecc. 12:13). However, unscriptural fear will lead many to reject God and His Word. A man blind from his birth (John 9:2) was healed by Jesus (John 9:7). The Pharisees, despising Jesus and His power, refused to believe that the man had been blind and then given his sight. For evidence, they turned to the man’s parents, two people who would surely proclaim the truth about their son. When asked, “His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, ***because they feared the Jews***: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue” (John 9:20-22, emphasis B.G.). Some individuals fear and show more respect towards men than they do for God (cf. Acts 5:29).

2. PRIDE

Some individuals detest God-given authority. They cannot stand the idea of having to submit to anyone but themselves. They only respect that with which they agree and shun

any attempts which seek to correct their wrongs. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Pro. 16:18). When Moses came to Pharaoh and proclaimed God’s command to let the people of Israel go, “Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go” (Exo. 5:2).

3. AMBIVALENCE

Some will not take the steps they need because they simply do not care. Many non-Christians fail to give proper consideration to the truth of God’s Word and see no need to act in any way other than how they please. Sadly, some Christians believe that their work is done as soon as they rise from the watery grave of baptism. Jesus teaches, “Who then is a ***faithful and wise servant***, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so ***doing***” (Mat. 25:45-46, emphasis B.G.). God requires that His children use their abilities to His glory. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your ***good works, and glorify your Father*** which is in heaven” (Mat. 5:16, emphasis B.G.).

Many times, all it takes is one step to get us started. Let us always be guided by the light of God’s Word (Psa. 119:105) so that we may travel down that strait and narrow way which leads to eternal life (Mat. 7:13-14).

- *Brad Green*