

Preacher's Pen points

Adjusting the Scales



I've been trying to lose a few pounds and I was congratulating myself on my success until I noticed that the scales had been accidentally adjusted backward three pounds! However, in the process I've discovered a great new way to keep feeling good about your weight. Every week simply adjust the scale backward one pound. When you step on the scales you'll not have to be confronted with increasing gains. Instead you will be greeted with positive reinforcement that you're doing great and you can continue your lifestyle unaltered. Sound good?

Adjusting God's Scales

Of course, no one would take this approach to weight loss, knowing that every day the thing that was changing was the scale and not our bodies. But ironically, there is a spiritual version of this practice that is very common in our world. If you don't like the person that you are, simply change the "scales" to one that makes you look better.

It's an old problem. Paul wrote to some of the people at Corinth: "*For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.*" (2 Cor. 10:12) Paul's charge was that they were measuring themselves not by the measure of God's will by their own self-congratulating standards.

The Pharisees adopted a similar approach to Scripture. They simply interpreted the Law in a way that conformed to their practice and thus congratulated themselves on their "righteousness" (Cf. Lk. 16:15; 18:11). Simply by adjusting the scales their performance was a perfect 10!

Modern Scale Adjusting

Today in our society we see a similar phenomenon. Compared to God's moral standards it appears that our society is escalating toward an immoral abyss. What was once viewed as abominable and immoral is now viewed as acceptable and even a civil liberty simply by adjusting the scales. Over a period of years abortion has gone from a murderous act to a civil right. Homosexuality has gone from a moral aberration to an alternative lifestyle. Pornography has gone from sexual perversion to acceptable adult entertainment.

Churches as Accomplices

It is expected that people in the unregenerate world would drift with the tide of moral degradation; but what is most appalling is the widespread capitulation of religious institutions to the culture. Today churches throughout the land have simply "reinterpreted" the teaching of Jesus to allow for some of these practices.

Our Challenge

There's probably not much we can do about the scale adjusting going on in society; but there is definitely something we can do about in it our own congregation and lives. Refraining from adjusting the truth to fit our lives has two important benefits: 1) It keeps us focused on increasing holiness according to God's standard. 2) It deepens our sense of gratitude for God's grace when we fail to live up to His standard. On the other hand, changing the scale might make people more comfortable with who they are; but the price to spiritual health is too high to pay. Let's work harder on ourselves and leave the scales alone!

—Johnny Felker (www.truthchasers.com)