

Are We Walking The Right Path?

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"Sometimes the right path is not always the easiest" - Princess Matoaka, a.k.a. "Pocahontas" (c. 1596-1617), a.k.a. Rebecca (Mrs. John) Rolfe--daughter of the Great Chief Powhatan, of Virginia.
By W.H. Lamb
Hits: 789

Back in the days when I could move my legs and arms without joint pain, and before the force of gravity became much "stronger", I used to do a lot of hiking in the North and South Carolina Blue Ridge Mountains with my kids and their friends, or with our adult friends. Finding the correct path in the high country, surrounded by rocks and trees, and often cloud cover, was very important. We all loved "the high country" and we spent many wonderful weekends or parts of vacation weeks exploring well known, and not so well known, great views and landmarks in "our" mountains. In every case, having trail maps and using good observation and common sense made our hikes both enjoyable and safe. Following the right path made ALL the difference.

God's Word tells us something about choosing the "right paths" in our lives. **Jeremiah 6:16 (N.I.V.)** instructs us: "***This is what the Lord says: Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your soul...***". God's Word further cautions us, in **Proverbs 21:16 (N.I.V.)** that, "***Whoever strays from the path of prudence comes to rest in the company of the dead.***" We've all heard tragic stories over the years of people who have become lost hiking in mountains or forested areas, whose lack of "prudence" or planning did propel them into the "company of the dead". Many who have attempted to climb to the summits of Mt. Everest or K-2 have never come down alive, and have joined that same "company", eternally. They made "poor choices" in assuming that they could easily conquer a mountain that punishes one's lack of careful planning and "prudence".

It seems to me that there are many in this present world who also make "poor choices" in selecting the "ancient", or right, path in life. So just what does it mean to "ask where the good way is, and walk in it"? Obviously, that "good way" is found in Scripture. Also, I recently discovered a wonderful essay on the internet titled, ***The Old Paths***, that "tells it" like many Americans of my generation remember fondly, and long to relive desperately. The author is only identified as "a retired minister who lives in Tennessee". Here is what he wrote:

"I like "The Old Paths", when Moms were at home, Dads were at work, brothers went into the army, and sisters got married BEFORE having children.

Crime did not pay; hard work did. And people knew the difference. Moms could cook, Dads would work, and children would behave.

Husbands were loving; wives were supportive, and children were polite. Women wore the jewelry, and men wore the pants. Women looked like ladies; men looked like gentlemen, and children looked decent.

People loved the truth, and hated a lie. They came to church to get IN, not to get OUT. Hymns sounded normal, and crying sounded sincere. Cursing was wicked; drinking was evil; and divorce

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was unthinkable
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By W.H. Lamb

The flag was honored; America was beautiful, and God was welcome!

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We read the Bible in public; prayed in school, and preached from house to house. To be called an American was worth dying for; to be called a Christian was worth living for; to be called a traitor was a shame!

Sex was a personal word. Homosexual was an unheard of word; and abortion was an illegal act. Preachers preached because they had a message; and Christians rejoiced because they had the victory! Preachers preached from the Bible; singers sang from the heart; and sinners turned to the Lord to be saved!

A new birth meant a new life; salvation meant a changed life; following Christ led to eternal life. Being a preacher meant you proclaimed the Word of God. Being a Deacon meant you would serve the Lord. Being a Christian meant you would live for Jesus. And being a sinner meant someone was praying for you.

Laws were based on the Bible; homes read the Bible, and churches taught the Bible. Preachers were more interested in new converts than new clothes and new cars. God was worshipped; Christ was exalted; and the Holy Spirit was respected!

Church was where you found Christians on the Lord's Day, rather than in the garden, on the golf course, on the creek bank, or being entertained somewhere else.

Those were the "OLD PATHS" that I liked best."

"WISDOM IS KNOWING THE RIGHT PATH TO TAKE. INTEGRITY IS TAKING IT!" ~ Author unknown

To some "modern" or younger people, that essay might sound "old fashioned" or "sexist", totally out of touch and irrelevant, but in the minds of many people of my generation (right after "The Greatest Generation), those "old paths" were related to "the good old days", and in many respects they were good days----not perfect days, to be sure, but seemingly better than the days we all are living through (or perhaps surviving) currently. My parents were married in 1930, and my father, being in construction, was mostly out of work from early in "The Depression" until the late 1930's, when construction began to slowly increase. They lived mostly on "relief" in those trying days (today's welfare, but nowhere near as generous). Yet in spite of their hardships, my mother often told me (she passed in 2002) that life in her challenging but "good old days" was BETTER than the life she experienced in her latter years.

I often wondered why she would make that claim, but the older I get and the more I observe of the shambles that "modern" man is making of this once God-fearing and God-honoring country, the

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more insights, get into what she really means. She was born in 1912, in the “last days of innocence” of American life; she grew up in “the roaring twenties” when “almost everything was possible and permissible”; she endured and barely survived the “depressing thirties”; she “made do” during the dark but patriotism-inducing years of WW11; and she basked in the sunlight of the final “golden years” of American solidarity from the end of WW11 until the early 1960’s, when the traditional American life as she and my father knew it rapidly began to slip away from them, and from those of us who followed. Once, my mother made the penetrating observation to me that she had already lived in the “best years” of our country’s existence. That sounded somewhat depressing to my younger self, but the older I get the more I understand what my mother meant, and the more I also believe that I and my generation have already lived through the “best years” of America. For the sake of those I love, I really hope that I’m wrong. What truly depresses me is when I realize that my grandchildren and my four great-grandchildren will probably consider this present youthful time of their lives, with all of the turmoil, tensions, political recriminations, cultural degradations, violence, hate, and trashing of the “old ways”, as their “good old days”. They’ll probably never know a true “golden time” like my “good old days” that I experienced throughout the 1940’s and 1950’s. How sad and depressing.

Did everyone in those halcyon days walk “the old paths”? No, of course they didn’t. Even then there were scoffers and mockers and idolaters who rejected those “old paths”—who refused to obey the laws of man and of God—who refused to admit that their way was the way unto death and eternal damnation, or at least to many years in prison. Those rebellious and lost souls have existed all throughout mankind’s history. Yet they persisted (and still persist) in choosing their own paths, not the “right paths” that brought people to a safe destination.

Today the scoffers and mockers and idolaters are still among us, actively sewing their seeds of doubt and confusion and mendacity—vigorously proclaiming the superiority of their “new ways”. Right near the site on the internet where I first saw “*The Old Paths*”, above, were the words of a mocker who claimed that NONE of those “old paths” was good, that those words were all lies, that the “old paths” led only to all of the bad and to all the problems in society, insinuating that only his “new paths” were worthy of being followed. God’s Word teaches otherwise, but these modern mockers refuse to heed the lessons of life that are found in Holy Scripture and instilled in us by the rapidly dwindling phenomena called “common sense”. **In the end, each one of us must choose which path we take in life—the one that leads to perdition, or the one that leads to eternal life—the one that leads to glorious mountain views, or the one that leads to walking off of a cliff in the “fog” of confusion and rebellion. The “right path” of becoming a Born-Again Christian is well marked in God’s Word if we choose to read it and apply it to our lives, so study it carefully, choose wisely, and that right path will lead you home!**