

The Point of Compromise

Even more crucial today than in 1980!

I was lying in bed on the night of November 7, 1980, with a question rolling around in my mind. I was a pastor and was concerned about the approaching day when our Christian freedoms will be taken away. The question was, "When will Christians compromise their faith and their relationship with each other in a time of difficulty?" I felt inclined to go to my study and write.

The answer that came to me was, "The point of compromise will be the point of affection," and these thoughts followed.

We will only be tempted to compromise in order to preserve something that is more important to us than the values or relationship that we are compromising. The point at which persons compromise will indicate where their affections are – what is most important to them.

If independence; material things; reputation; the church institution; freedom from pain and suffering; or security are the object of our affections, we will be tempted to compromise in order to preserve them. Or, simply put, if they are not, we will not!

In the hour of trial many will compromise very easily because they will not believe they are compromising on spiritual issues. Their compromising will have to do with comfort, the preservation of life, security or material things.

Persons in places of position in banking, business, and even church administration will acquiesce to demands because they will rationalize that by doing so they will be able to continue in that position themselves, or keep that institution in action.

Many people will succumb to the subtle temptation of self-preservation, versus principle. They will do things which will cause others hurt – even their loved ones – in order to preserve and advance themselves. Often persons will do this while actually believing that they are doing what is right.

One of the most powerful deterrents to compromise will be deep, personal relationships within the church community. The present spirit of independence and individualism will contribute to compromise. Appropriate interdependence and accountability, will provide strength.

In this age, in America, we have come to believe that pain, want and suffering are to be avoided at almost any cost. So much of the American way of life is geared to protect us from these things. Insurances, and reliance upon drugs and other medicines have helped condition us this way.

Very recently, the faith and prosperity teaching has to some degree, led us that way as well. I affirm the faith and prosperity principles, but believe that many times the application is in error. I believe that God is saying these things to the church today, not that we would enjoy wealth, bigger homes and cars, and finer clothing, but that we would develop a walk and trust in Him that will enable us to survive (with suffering) in a time of trial.

Born in 1940, Ken Stoltzfus has worked as a pilot, ordained Christian minister, businessman, missionary to Africa and writer. This is #4 in the section, "Poetry and Piety", at www.John2031.com, and is one of many short writings that can be found there.

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