

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

October 26, 2016

Issue No. 270 Mark Aites, Editor

Moderation

"Moderation in temper is always a virtue; but moderation in principle is always a vice." – Thomas Paine

"The heart is great which shows moderation in the midst of prosperity." – Seneca

"Candor and generosity, unless tempered by due moderation, leads to ruin." – Tacticus

"Virtue is a habit of the mind, consistent with nature and moderation and reason." – Cicero

"Fortify yourself with moderation; for this is an impregnable fortress." – Epictetus

Most folks generally regard moderation in all things as a safe course of action. And in some areas of life, it is indeed a wise course of action (cf. 1 Tim. 2:9). We can see it in the food we eat, our dress, in the general balance of life with work and recreation, and even in the emotions which we display. But regretfully, some have sought to find permissiveness in sin with the excuse of moderation.

They reason they can use some profanity as long as it is tempered and used sparingly. It is alright to lie, as long as you don't make a habit of it. You can even steal on certain occasions and justify the action and then defend it with moderation. There are advocates of drinking alcohol who seek to hide behind the excuse of moderation. Sexual sin is alright as long as one does not get too carried away. And the list goes on. In fact, you can name most any sin, and someone will defend it with the argument of moderation.

When you read Eph. 4:25-32; Paul addresses things to avoid and never once defends the idea of doing something in moderation. For example, "Therefore, putting away lying, 'let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another" (Eph. 4:25). Can you find an excuse to lie to your neighbor in moderation in this text?

Look at what Paul says in the twin epistle. "But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him" (Col. 3:8-10).

And the other area in which moderation is suggested, comes with our eternal destiny. Some today don't want the Heaven or Hell destinies, but in fact would much rather have a third alternative. One anonymous author even wrote, "Happy they who steadily pursue a middle course." But the failure in this is that there is no middle ground! Again, it is either Heaven or Hell.