Principles

"Important principles may, and must, be inflexible." – Abraham Lincoln

"In matters of style, swim with the current; In matters of principle, stand like a rock." – Thomas Jefferson

"Change your opinions, keep to your principles; change your leaves, keep intact your roots." – Victor Hugo

"A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both." – Dwight Eisenhower

"A person without principles is devoid of character: if he had character, he would feel he needs principles." – Nicolas Chamfort

Just what are principles? One definition states, "A fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning."

Certainly one aspect of principles to us would have to be morality. There is a code of conduct or system of ethics that we prescribe to. For example, our principles are such that we do not use foul language. Our principles prevent us from committing adultery, theft, or even murder. Our principles can even dictate to us how we dress or how we act. They even guide us in the friends we keep (1 Cor. 15:33). And they motivate us to do good. It is when we compromise them that we turn from God.

But there is even a deeper aspect as seen in Scripture. The Hebrew writer states, "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God…" (Heb. 5:12). The phrase, "First principles," should interest us.

These principles are first in order of rank. They would be the first things that are taught which serve as a basis of our faith. Sometimes they are referred to as the basic fundamentals of our faith.

These basic principles affect our personal principles and serve to guide us in a way that is right before God. The reason being is because they are rooted in Scripture. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psa. 119:105). "As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness…" (2 Pet. 1:3).

What we must be on guard against is allowing our principles to be guided by man. Too many have been drawn in to the idea of upholding what other people think. The Bible warns, "O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23).

Hold to your principles, but make sure your principles are rooted in God's Word!