

## MEASURE TWICE

### Introduction

- A. Text: **Eph. 5:15,16.**
- B. An old bit of carpenter's advice is: *Measure twice, cut once.*
  - 1. The more *consequential* an action is, the more carefully it needs to be thought out.
  - 2. Wise people know it is never a waste of time to *ensure accuracy.*
  - 3. It is far better to make sure one is right — deliberately, cautiously, and carefully — than hastily and thoughtlessly to act in ways that turn out to be wrong.
- C. It is possible for a person's *life* itself to be "ill-measured."
- D. In regard to God, we are sometimes shockingly *careless.*

### I. IN THE MATTER OF RELIGION IN GENERAL

- A. Given the ramifications of the question, the casual way in which many have tossed aside "religion" is nearly incredible.
- B. The average person has rejected religion on the basis of *hastily made assumptions from inadequate information*, not a serious consideration of the genuine article.
  - 1. Many have never taken the time to try to investigate the stereotypes, caricatures, and prejudicial slogans that turn people against religion.
  - 2. Often, modern people do not even have the curiosity of the Athenian philosophers to hear the case for Christianity - **Ac. 17:16-21,22-34.**
  - 3. Perhaps we are more like those in Athens who hurriedly mocked than those who wanted to hear more before making up their minds - **v.32.**
- C. Many have never truly "considered" or "looked at" the evidence. Cf. **Psa. 8:3-5.**

### II. IN THE MATTER OF "CHOOSING A CHURCH"

- A. How *thoughtful* is the average person's analysis of what is going on in the world of "Christian" denominationalism?
- B. Many people's approach to choosing a church is little better than hit-or-miss.
  - 1. If all the seven churches of **Rev. 2,3** were in our locality, on what basis would we decide where to identify ourselves?
  - 2. How carefully do we check the "accuracy" of churches and their practices against the authoritative standard of the Scriptures?
- C. The question of *whether a doctrine is true* is no trivial matter, and it takes some searching find out!
- D. Dealing responsibly with the problem of modern religious division requires at least the attitude of the Bereans - **Ac. 17:11.**

### III. IN THE MATTER OF THE LIFE THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD LIVE

- A. In a world filled with evil, there is no realistic hope of living acceptably before God without a *careful, circumspect* approach to the matter - **Eph. 5:15-17**.
- B. Imagine your life as a speech. What kind of speech is it: a painstakingly prepared text, or an impromptu performance that you make up as you go along?
- C. We need more men and women who will consciously and carefully distinguish right from wrong - **Hb. 5:14**.

#### Conclusion

- A. Socrates is reported to have said, "The unexamined life is not worth living" — life is too consequential not to be thoughtful and deliberate about it.
- B. We ought to carefully *settle on our convictions* and then *fit our lives to those convictions*.
  - 1. Too often we merely do what comes naturally — and then make up a set of "convictions" to fit what we've already done.
  - 2. Cf. Dan Shipley's article on "After-Thought Authority" in *Plain Talk*, July 1972.
- C. The spiritual consequences of "ill-measured" deeds are eternal — we can't afford to cut now and measure later.
- D. We get one life, and only one. Once done, that life can't be undone.
  - 1. Building a life is serious business.
  - 2. Constructing a character is important work.
  - 3. Mistakes are disastrous.
- E. What kind of words describe the quality of your life's "workmanship" up to now?
  - 1. Haphazard, slipshod, makeshift?
  - 2. Or purposeful, meticulous, thorough? Cf. **2 Tim. 2:15**.
- F. It is vital that we:
  - 1. *Study* to find the truth.
  - 2. *Think* about the significance and implications of the truth.
  - 3. *Act* on the basis of the truth.
- G. Jesus warned us to "count the cost" (**Lk. 14:25-33**) of discipleship.
  - 1. This would involve an equally sober assessment of the cost of *non-discipleship!*
  - 2. The fact is, it costs very much more to refuse discipleship than to accept it.
  - 3. How carefully are we considering this?
- H. So far, is your response to Jesus the result of *careful consideration* and *deliberate action*? He deserves nothing less.