

# WHAT DO YOU THINK?

## Mark 8:31-32

By Carl McMurray

~~~~~

How would you feel if your best friend began, one day, to tell you of great tragedy and even death that was soon to enter his life. How would you react? How fiercely would you try to help or comfort him? Mark 8:31 is an account of just such a situation, when Jesus was trying to prepare His disciples for His approaching suffering and death. The recorded reaction of one of His disciples is at the same time both natural and revealing when we consider man's relationship to God's will.

Verse 32 states that Jesus was, "stating the matter plainly" and it appears as if the picture of His death was simply too much for Peter to bear. The often vocal apostle took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Jesus. Certainly he must have been doing this out of the purest of motives, his sincere love for Jesus. He did not want to think of his Master suffering and dying, and this was the way he would show his concern. Notice however, that even with the best of intentions, what Peter was saying and advocating was absolutely wrong and Jesus saw the need to correct him.

Peter lacked understanding about the whole plan of God and the purpose for the Christ coming. He needed to learn the same lesson that many today need to learn. What we think about a matter of God's will, even when we have the best intentions can be.....

...**MISTAKEN**. Peter would have done better to keep quiet and learn. In thinking solely of his personal friendship, he was not able to see the Christ's love for all men and the necessity of His death. We too can get caught up in the tunnel-vision of a small issue or a single Bible passage. We can forget that all Bible passages need to harmonize with others to see all of God's will on a particular subject. Or our particular issue may have more to do with personal judgment than it does with revealed doctrine.

...**CARNAL MINDED**. Jesus rebuked Peter for thinking of man's interests instead of God's. How often do we try to demand God's attention in prayer to minor inconveniences and petty bickering, while at the same time giving little attention ourselves to the affairs of His kingdom and the sharing of His gospel? It is easy for our thoughts to be centered on physical things rather than spiritual.

...**HARMFUL TO THE CAUSE**. Just because we have good intentions doesn't mean that what we're doing is "good." Wrapped up in self, Peter couldn't see the great need for Jesus to die. If he could have gotten his way, what great harm would Satan have accomplished to God's plan which had begun before the world itself? How many souls have been turned away, how many have slipped away without a hand, how many churches divided, and friends alienated because men fought to get "their way" rather than simply following the revealed will of God?

...**WORTHY OF REBUKE**. Because of the above reasons Peter needed rebuke. Even when we have good intentions - we may be wrong. We may need someone to open our eyes a little and give us another viewpoint. As well as loving the Lord greatly, Peter also had a heart of acceptance when Jesus spoke to him. Pleasant or unpleasant, if it came from his Master, Peter was willing to put his "think so's" on the back burner and receive His words. That needs to be our attitude also.

In verse 34, Jesus' instructions were to "deny self" in order to follow Him. We need to deny self's opinions and self's wishes when it comes to doing God's will. We need to open our Bibles and listen to Jesus. We also need to deny self's pride when someone tries to help us by correcting us. It is not our "think so's" or our intentions that reveal God's will, only God's word does that. That is where we need to be looking for direction and answers. God will bless our efforts to grow in understanding of his will if we will but subject our hearts and spirits to follow His instructions.

Contact the writer:  
SouthsBest@aol.com

