

Oaks-West Church of Christ

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Coffee Bean Religion

by Jefferson David Tant

My grandfather, J. D. Tant, liked strong coffee. In his time (1861-1941), many ground their own beans. One day while eating with a family, he asked the housewife "Sister, do you have any coffee beans?" "Why, yes brother Tant." "Well," he replied, "If you'll bring me a coffee bean, I'll lay it here on my saucer and smell of it while I drink this lukewarm water you've poured in my cup." (Grandfather could be a bit plain-spoken at times.)

Is it possible that's how some seek a religious "flavor"? They are lukewarm in serving God but keep a Bible on the coffee table thinking its "flavor" will be sufficient.

Through the years, I've known many so-called "coffee bean Christians." They are usually good people, and often are regular in church attendance. But they are like the student when the teacher calls the roll. She calls, "Snerdly Churndasher?" "Here,"

he answers. Yes, he is present, but that's all. His lesson was unprepared, and his mind is on the weekend fishing trip with dad. He just occupies space. Or it might be like the man with a paralyzed arm. His arm is "present" as a part of his body, but it has no useful function.

What's the missing ingredient among "coffee beaners"? Would you say it is zeal, commitment? As a matter of fact, Christ used my grandfather's "lukewarm" term in the letter to the Laodicean church. "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth'" (Revelation 3:15-16).

The words "whole heart" are used often in Scripture. When Hezekiah asked God to spare his life, he prayed, "Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I

Coffee Bean Religion ... concluded from front page

have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight" (II Kings 20:3). When God promised to restore Israel, he said: "I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart" (Jeremiah 24:7).

David advised Solomon as a wise father: "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts" (I Chronicles 28:9).

The 119th Psalm uses "all my heart" ("whole heart"—ASV) eight times, as in v. 10: "With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments."

While this phrase is not in the New Testament, the sentiment is clearly seen. Consider I Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." "Abounding" is from the Greek "perisseuo," and is defined by Strong's Greek Dictionary: "to superabound (in quantity or quality), be in excess, be superfluous; also (transitively) to cause to superabound or excel:--(make, more) abound, (have, have more) abundance (be more) abundant, be the better, enough and to spare, exceed, excel, increase, be left,

redound, "remain (over and above)."

That sounds pretty much like the "whole heart," doesn't it? You might fill a glass of water and keep pouring until the water is running over. That's "abounding."

Now, dear reader, how would you describe your religion? If your religion consists of leading a good, moral life while faithfully attending church meetings, "what do ye more than others?" as Christ asked in Matthew 5:47. Do you practice "pure and undefiled religion" through acts of benevolence (James 1:27)? Matthew 25:31-46 is a great passage describing the Judgment Day scene, and acts of mercy have much to do with our eternal destiny.

Do you practice discipleship? We are all called to be disciples. A disciple is one who is a "learner, a pupil." "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master" (Matthew 10:24). So ... if we are to be followers of Christ, then we are to be engaged in the same work he did. A carpenter's disciple or pupil is learning to practice the same trade as his teacher. And what was Christ's trade or occupation? "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

If you are a disciple of Christ, how much effort do you put forth to talk to others, to set up studies with them, to save their souls? If you don't, then are you really a disciple? Don't be a coffee bean. Drink the whole cup!

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.



Upcoming Ladies' Bible Classes - Next class March 23.

Services - The elders have decided to continue with the current service times of 10:45 am Sundays and 7:00 pm Wednesdays through the month of April. We will reevaluate in April. Thank you for your support and encouragement as we make these difficult decisions! --DT for the elders

Mark Your Calendars - our spring meeting with Tim Stevens is scheduled for April 25-28

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.



Please remember the following individuals in your daily prayers:

Jack Wilson
Jerry & Nancy Richardson
Ron & Sue Stanberry
Karen Hallmark
Morgan O'Hair
Dinah Williams
Bobbie Gibbons
Tyler Hairston
Don & Alene Simmons

And continue to pray for each other

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

We have many that face challenges on a daily basis and need your prayers as well.

“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

