

Dead Fish Go With The Flow!

"BE DIFFERENT! Don't go with the flow!" we are urged. "Don't follow the crowd! Even a dead fish can float downstream." It does not take any effort or work on the part of a fish to go with the flow and drift downstream. Even a dead fish can float. Only a living and healthy fish can swim against the current and travel upstream. In the same way, any weak Christian can live like the world; it takes a vital, healthy faith to enable someone to stand on their convictions, firm against the tide of opinion and the example of unbelievers.

Perhaps we can carry the analogy a bit further. With the polluted condition of many of our modern streams and rivers, it is not only dead fish that float downstream. Trash, industrial waste, and pollutants of one kind or another floats downstream. A fish that travels in that direction finds itself swimming in increasingly fouled and filthy waters. The purest, cleanest waters are found farther upstream nearer the source, where people rarely go. What kind of water would you rather swim in? What kind of life would you rather have? Pure waters are reached only by swimming against the current!

Obviously, we do not want to be one of those wimpy, weak-willed, dead-fish Christians; yet it is so easy to go with the flow and follow the crowd. If we carelessly live like everyone else, we will find ourselves surrounded by the pollution of sin. Is there any way out of this mess? What does it take for us to be able to swim against the current and move farther upstream? I suggest that we need to concentrate on five main points.

Convictions

We will have to know what we believe and then hold to it strongly, for, as it has often been said, those who stand for nothing will fall for anything. We are given the teachings of the apostles and prophets so that we may "*no longer be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine*" (Ephesians 4:14). We must read our Bibles, accept the principles we find there as our standard of conduct, and then stand firmly on scriptural convictions! How rare it is to see that today! Most of us are so caught up in feelings and tradition, we do not allow truth to shine through.

Courage

The timid and fearful will not make it to heaven: "*But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns*

with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). When they see that God’s way will require them to leave the false security of doing what all the rest of the world is doing and strike out on their own, their hearts will fail them. Rather than standing against the crowd with the courage of convictions (Romans 8:31), they take the easy way out, turning back to the world, to sin and condemnation. Joshua said, “Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord you God is with you wherever you go” (1:9).

Strength

We must have power and might to stand firmly against the flood of evil that would swiftly sweep us downstream to our destruction. Paul said, *“Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong” (1 Corinthians 16:13).* We could not successfully withstand temptation and sin that threatens our spiritual well-being by ourselves. Therefore, we are called to *“be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might” (Ephesians 6:10).* Fortified with power that comes only from God (Ephesians 3:16), we can say with Paul, *“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).*

Endurance

For most of us, the Christian race is not a brief sprint to the finish line, but rather it is a long, grueling marathon. Listen to the words of the Hebrew writer, *“You have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised ... ‘My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him’” (10:36, 38).* It is so sad to see those who have started on the Christian way later give up, forfeiting the race. They did not have the the long-distance endurance to run the race through to the end. Therefore, *“let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus” (Hebrews 12:1-2).*

Heavenly Goals

The reason we want to travel upstream is because we are seeking something better and higher than the careless world around us. We are not trying to be different from the world just for the sake of being different. We are different because we are pursuing different goals. We have to keep these goals continually before us. Paul said, *“Keep seeking the things above, where Christ is ... Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Colossians 3:1-2).* Raise your sights! Don’t follow the foolish crowd!

Adapted From Calvin Schlabach