



But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. -

Matthew 15:9

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The Saga of Elbow Grease

Let's start this with a little exercise. We're going to have an imaginary politician and since he's imaginary let's give him an imaginary name. Elbow is a word that is infrequently used for a person's name so let's call our imaginary politician Elbow and his last name will be Grease.

With a name like Elbow Grease we could probably make a lot of jokes about this imaginary politician, but let's be nice to the poor guy. Since he's a politician he has a multitude of issues and needs all the help he can get.

Throughout the past 42 years in public office, Mr. Grease has made a lot of public appearances and given a multitude of speeches. Let's take a small look at some of the imaginary speeches our friend Elbow has given.

Once when Elbow was accused of saying something he hadn't said, he denied it with the following statement, "I never said that crows have webbed feet. I said that ducks have webbed feet and they seem to like to crow about it."

At another place when speaking into a microphone, Elbow stated, "My next door neighbors once visited the country of Javulala. They found the Javulalas to be welcoming and benevolent."

On another occasion Mr. Grease made the public declaration that, "The city's sewage treatment facility is outdated and needs to be replaced. I propose we take a look at the budget and see if there is a way to fund a new facility before our present facility turns into a scum pond."

And at yet another gathering our friend Elbow stated, "I sent my assistant to Bermedual for some training on the new telephone system."

Mr. Elbow Grease had devoted his life to furthering the good of the people in the city where he lived. He served for 12 years on the City Counsel and from there was voted into the position of Mayor where he had been serving for the past 30 years.

Holding a public office is not something for the faint of heart when it comes time for elections. That's when many politicians will show their true nature because the mud begins to fly. And even though Mr. Elbow Grease had served his city faithfully and conscientiously for the past 42 years, he wasn't immune to the vicious attacks of others. Many of those others were politicians who were so full of themselves that they believed they could do a better job than Elbow was doing and had the audacity to proclaim to the city their own virtues while at the same time tossing muck and mire at Mr. Grease.

During one election Mr. Grease met the one we'll call Mr. Slandermaster. Mr. Slandermaster wasn't running for public office, however, his son had decided that he wanted to be the mayor of their fair little town and went to his daddy for help. Helping his son to achieve his goal was something that Mr. Slandermaster believed he could do and he almost pulled it off. But in the end Mr. Elbow Grease's record spoke for itself and Elbow was re-elected to the office of mayor.

Are you wondering what Mr. Slandermaster did that was so devious it almost cost Elbow his job? Mr. Slandermaster worked as a sound technician for a radio station. He had the skills and the equipment available to take recordings of Elbow's earlier speeches and cut and splice them to make Elbow appear to be saying something he never said. He then took his little work of art to the news director and told him that he had found it in some archives. The news director then ran the following snippet and made the claim that Mr. Elbow Grease had been guilty of hate speech. Here's what the radio aired:

"I said Javulalas are scum and should be sent to Bermedual."

There was an outcry when this falsehood was aired over the radio. A number of Javulalas had moved to the fair city in hopes of finding a better life when their country had fallen upon bad times. The citizens of Bermedual were offended because they felt it was a slur upon their town.

This story was an allegory. It is not a true story and any similarities to any real-life human is purely coincidental. But it serves a point. It shows that this tactic is

underhanded, unethical, slanderous, and an outright lie. And infuriating as it is, it happens to us all the time.

My experience has been that the Adventist church is guilty of this very type of behavior. And I once heard a well-known Adventist evangelist use the following text to justify the teaching that we take bits and pieces of the Bible and make them say what it is supposed to say. But taking something out of context is deceptive and a form of lying.

[For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: – Isaiah 28:10 KJV](#)

So what is my point? Simply to pay attention to what you are being taught. Make sure that you are getting the whole truth.

A few days ago I saw where someone had posted a video on a Facebook group that I follow. This was a video of Ted Wilson making a plea to the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I'll give you the link at the bottom of this document. Before you watch it be wary and pay attention to what he is saying. What I'm hearing is a plea for the members to worship the church rather than the Creator. I'm also hearing someone bemoaning that the church is no longer following the man-made rules and he's urging the members to return to those man-made rules. When you listen to this keep asking yourself how his concerns reflect Jesus. Do they show God to be loving or vengeful?

Those were only 2 of the several issues that I had with his presentation. When you listen how will you feel? Will you believe him because it's what you have been taught? Will you believe him based upon his position as head of the Adventist church? Or will you think for yourself and believe or disbelieve based upon the evidence that you have studied out for yourself?

Mr. Wilson's plea for people to return to keeping the list of rules tells a lot about this man. We need look no further than the list of moral development to find at what level of spiritual maturity he appears to be operating. The need to follow a list of rules is ranked at level 1.

This is the level of mentality at which a baby or a slave operates. He doesn't truly know right from wrong and must have a list of rules to follow. If he does things right then he gets rewarded. If he messes up then he is punished. It's the level at which the Israelites were functioning when they were delivered from slavery. They had to have a list of rules to follow so God gave them the 10 commandments and the Levitical rules. Read their story for yourself and see

how following this list of rules turned out. It led to some disastrous consequences that still plague modern society.

Functioning at this level doesn't lead you to have a true knowledge of the Creator. It simply focuses on following those man-made rules that have been set in place by the church. But focusing on rules is ultimately a focus on yourself rather than a focus on God. Following a list of rules led to the Israelites wandering in the desert until they died. It won't have much difference for those today who continue to insist on following rules. It's only by coming to know and focusing on the truth about God that we will have eternal life. And this truth about God and his character is what the Holy Spirit is striving to impart to us.

Think. Think for yourself. Throw out everything you were taught and think it through for yourself then make your own decisions.

Dr. Tim Jennings has a better presentation on moral development than I can provide so I'll give you a link to his information. And with that, I bid you good morning. Happy Sabbath to all. May your day be filled to overflowing with the presence of God.

Love to all,

Hannah

Dr. Jennings: http://comeandreason.com/files/share/SevenLevels_Complete.pdf

Ted Wilson: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_K2zQYbh-Y