



Word Camouflage

Calling It Something Else

The footnote in the New International Version at 2 Kings 18:4 is most interesting. When Hezekiah found the children of Israel worshipping the brazen serpent made by Moses in the wilderness, he destroyed it. Hezekiah called the serpent “Nehushtan.” The footnote explains the meaning of the word as “a serpent made of brass.”

We wonder how such an idol could have existed for so long. It would seem that it would have been destroyed in one of the reformation movements of one of the judges or kings. In my opinion, it lasted so long because it apparently was not considered an idol. Perhaps the children of Israel justified the worship by not calling it an idol. Hezekiah, however, came and called it what it really was—a brass image of a snake.

He removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah. He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it; and it was called Nehushtan.

2 Kings 18:4

How often sin is justified by either ignoring it or calling it by a different name! By calling adultery “a loving relationship.” By justifying divorce simply as one exercising “the right to be happy.” By calling a life of sensual pleasure “living with gusto.”

In answer to a critic, Abraham Lincoln asked, “How many legs does a dog have?” “Four,” was the reply. “If you call its tail a leg, how many does it have?” “Five,” was the answer. “No,” Lincoln said, “just calling a tail a leg does not make it a leg.” – Author Unknown

LESSON

We need to be careful not to use camouflage words to justify sinful actions.

Whatever it is, calling it something else doesn't change what it is!

Serpent-worship, how revolting it may appear, was an extensively diffused form of idolatry; and it would obtain an easier reception in Israel because many of the neighboring nations, such as the Egyptians and Phoenicians, adored idol gods in the form of serpents as the emblems of health and immortality.

— JAMES-FAUCETT-BROWN DICTIONARY

The Birth of Pseudo-facts

Oft-Repeated 'Truths'

"You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' ... and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day."

Matthew 28:13-15

Untruths and half-truths repeated frequently and unceasingly have a habit of becoming established facts. They acquire a life of their own. Once established it is extremely difficult to refute them. Challenges to them are seen as railings of one who is ignorant and are dismissed without due consideration. Here are a few classic examples:

GOVERNMENT

"The United States constitution requires separation of church and state." This statement is not found in the constitution. Article 1 of the United States Constitution actually states:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

This untruth is often repeated in the effort to remove any vestige of religion from the American scene. *The one who questions this "fact" is characterized as a person who wants to bind their religious views and morals on others.*

SCIENCE

"The facts of evolution are evident and beyond dispute." This statement is used to establish evolution as the true history of man. It doesn't matter that the "evidence" is subject to various interpretations, with many scientists in disagreement. It does not address the fact that many "facts" of evolution have been debunked or modified by scientists themselves. Evolution is a theory that produces more questions than it answers. *Any one who denies this "fact" is marked as a willfully-ignorant, narrowminded, Bible-thumper, who refuses to accept the truth.*

But who is narrow-minded? Those who summarily rule out a supreme force (Spirit) behind the origin of the universe by saying: "We know that it was not created by a superior being." [What "wisdom", what arrogance!]

RELIGION

"It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you are sincere." This statement finds wide acceptance in this age of "tolerance." To think otherwise is to harbor unhealthy thoughts, according to one professor. *Anyone who challenges this statement is branded as narrow-minded and intolerant.* It doesn't occur to them that they are the ones who are actually narrow-minded and intolerant – allowing no other view than the one they espouse.

One can be sincerely mistaken. For example: Saul of Tarsus.

"So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

Acts 26:9

"... I acted ignorantly in unbelief ..."

1 Timothy 1:13

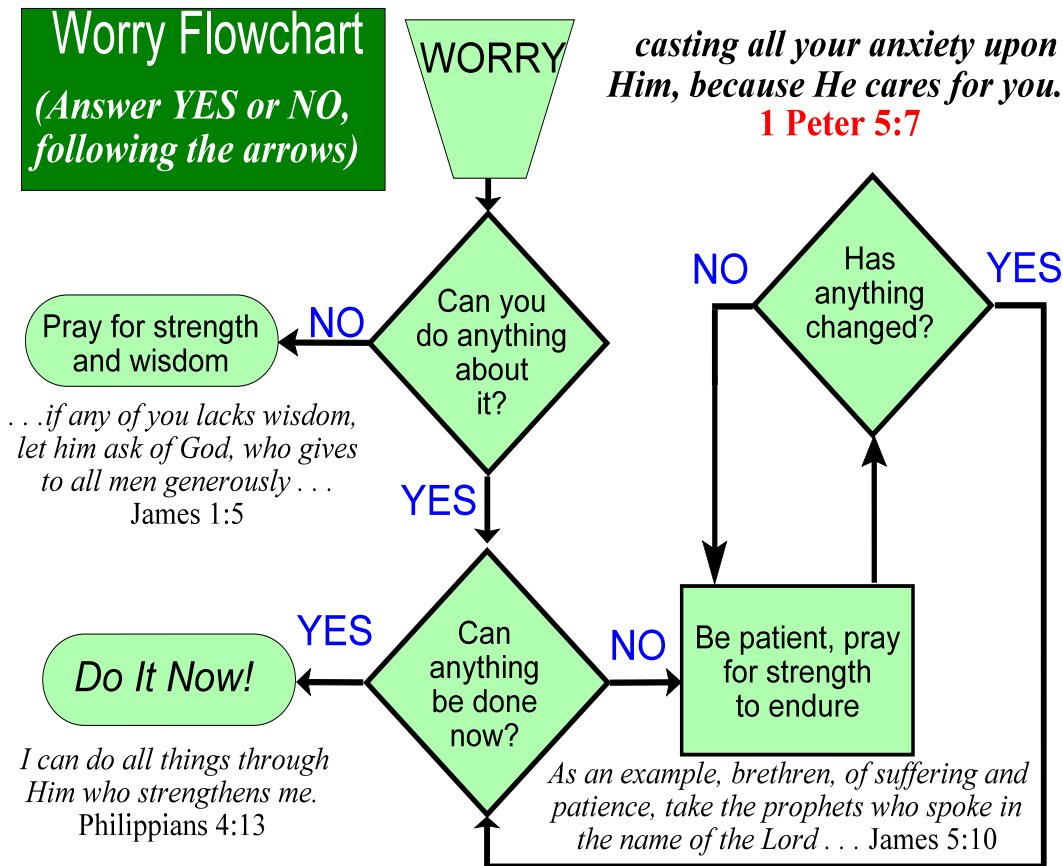
Jesus taught ...

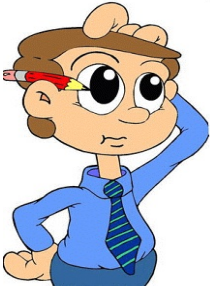
"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Matthew 6:31-34

Worry and Anxiety

Things happen over which we have little or no control. And they cause us to have concern which can escalate and turn into worry and anxiety.

Some years ago a member ask me for some Biblical references that would help her deal with a problem that was causing her to have sleepless nights and stressful days. I designed this flowchart based on principles taught in the New Testament to aid her in dealing with her anxiety. She said it helped her greatly. I have reproduced it here with the thought that others may find it helpful.





Ponder This

Christian

One of the obvious facts about being a Christian: you either function or fizzle.

What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

James 2:14-17

* * *

The best way to convince others about the value of following Christ is to show them.

In all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

Titus 2:7-8

* * *

Satan is willing for anyone to profess Christian principles—as long as it's not practiced.

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:9

BORROWED, BUT WORTH REPRINTING

◆ ◆ ◆ 'That's Life, Too!'

Solomon tells us that "pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." Do we believe it?

- Pride likes nothing better than unrestrained independence. It often shows in proposing the law for others while thinking oneself not obligated.
- Pride results in a competitive spirit. It often shows in those who become disquieted at the good fortune of others.
- Pride does not like correction. It shows little tolerance for those who would dare question, and outright disdain for those who would dare disagree.

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You can never really say, "Oh, I just wasn't thinking." Thinking is the work room in which all deeds—good or bad—are formed. You may not have thought deeply nor long, but whatever you did, it was because you first thought it.

– From the book "That's Life, Too!" by Dee Bowman  
Ordering information: (863) 688-2665

## ✿ THOUGHT TIDBITS ✿

The actions of men are the best interpreters of their thoughts.

Some use a bowlful of words to express a spoonful of thought.

Our words may hide our thoughts, but our actions will reveal them.

F.Y.C. is a monthly publication by Ron Adams.

Articles written by others are duly noted.

Bible references are from the NASB except where another translation is referenced.

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