



4050 80th Avenue North, Pinellas Park, Fl

SKYVIEW BULLETIN

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THE SLIPPERY SLOPE



We have all heard the “slippery slope” argument, which seems to have the ring of wisdom and scriptural correctness. We often hear this when something is suggested that may be a break in “tradition,” or something that has never been done before. When it cannot be established that the thing under consideration is without biblical authority, those who oppose will often reach in their supply of objections and come up with the “slippery slope.” If we do something, which isn’t necessarily wrong, we are certainly on a “slippery slope” we are told. “Just think what it might lead to,” we are encouraged to consider. If we allow one thing then we will have to allow something else which may or may not be wrong, so the best thing to do is just be on the “safe side.”

I have used this argument before, but I am not sure this is even a biblical argument in the first place. If we use this reasoning, then we will be paralyzed to act. Anything—let me repeat this—ANYTHING—can lead to something wrong or incorrect. This being true, we better not do anything because of what it might lead to. We can be on the safe side and do nothing, or can we?

An example: Through the years some brethren have changed the use of the church building and made it a facility to provide recreational activities or to meet the social needs of the community. Therefore, we better not have a building in which to meet, because of what it might lead to. Since there is the danger of a misuse of the building, are we on a “slippery slope,” when we provide a place in which we can worship? It’s not wrong to build and maintain a building for worship, but it is wrong to turn it into a gymnasium, or a soup kitchen or a social hall, and since this is wrong having a building can lead to something wrong. It all started with building a meeting house, so to be on the “safe side,” maybe we better not have a building. This is the “slippery slope,” argument.

Another example: Most congregations have preachers who evangelize and teach. But many preachers have become “pastors” in a denominational sense. They actually “run” the congregation. They are in charge—they make the decisions—some even assume more authority than elders. This abuse all started with having a preacher. So, to be “safe,” and to avoid a “slippery slope,” let’s not have preachers anymore. As already pointed out, if we apply this reasoning to everything we do, we better stop doing anything at all, because of the potential danger it may lead to.

This argument is often used by those who object to doing something but don’t have a biblical case to make. They cannot show that the action is unscriptural, so they just say if we do this we are on a “slippery slope.” (back page)

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*William Stewart—Kingston, Canada
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WORSHIP TIMES

SUNDAY

Worship.....9:30 A.M.
Classes.....10:50 A.M.
Worship.....6:00 P.M.

WORSHIP PLACE

4050 80th Ave N
PO Box 3118
Pinellas Park, Fla. 33780

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Not only may the “slippery slope” argument not be biblical, there is a passage that suggests this reasoning is faulty.

Notice Luke 6:1-5 : *One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels. 2 Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" 3 Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? 4 He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." 5 Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."*

Jesus’ disciples were plucking heads of grain, sifting the chaff out by rubbing it in their hands and eating it. The problem was this was done on a Sabbath. Everyone knew the law of the Sabbath. Doing any work on the Sabbath was strictly forbidden (Exodus 20:9-10). The question focused on whether or not the disciples were working.

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The Law taught that if a farmer went out and harvested his field or sifted the chaff on the Sabbath, he would be sinning. Yet, Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, said that what His disciples were doing was not sinning.

The Pharisees who brought the condemnation against Jesus’ disciples were using the logic of the “slippery slope.” If you can pluck ONE grain and sift it, you can pluck TWO. If you can pluck TWO, you can pluck TEN. If you can pluck TEN, you can pluck an entire ROW and if you can pluck an entire row, you can pluck a WHOLE FIELD. Since plucking a field on the Sabbath is wrong, plucking ONE grain is wrong. They might even have reasoned, “We’re not sure if plucking just ONE grain is wrong, but we better be on the safe side and nobody can pluck even ONE grain on the Sabbath.” Plucking just one grain is a “slippery slope,” so it’s wrong to pluck one grain of wheat on the Sabbath.

The problem with this is it just isn't true. Jesus said that plucking a few heads of grain and rubbing it in their hands and eating it was not “working,” and therefore was not a violation of the Sabbath law. Jesus should know because the text says He is Lord of the Sabbath. But the Pharisees read into the actions of the disciples much more than was actually there. They believed Jesus’ disciples were on a “slippery slope,” so they condemned what they did.

What the “slippery slope” often translates into are rules for everybody else, and even entire congregations, to follow. We don't like what is being suggested, but we can't find any biblical basis for opposing it, so we bring out the “slippery slope” argument. Maybe it is something never tried before. Perhaps it is not “traditional.” Maybe it is “different from the norm.” We know that what is proposed is according to scripture—it does not violate any biblical principle— but in our judgment it is not what we think is best, or we just don't like it, and so we attempt to convince others that it should not be done by using the “slippery slope.” Or, we argue, “It may lead to something wrong.” The problem here is that it “may not lead to something wrong.” In fact, it may lead to something that would be in the best interests of everyone else or the congregation.

Certainly, there are things that are inherently wrong. There are things we can do that would be obvious violations of biblical principle. There are things we can be involved in that are not according to the pattern. To do, or even suggest doing something that is condemned or not authorized by scripture should be refused, rejected and avoided.

But when something is scriptural, it should not be avoided just because I might not like it, or in my personal judgment think it is not the thing to do. Something might lead to something wrong, but we can prevent that from happening by exercising preventive care. Let's not paralyze ourselves by opposing scriptural things by pointing out the possibility of what it could lead to.

I mentioned earlier that I have used the “slippery slope” argument before, but I am not going to use it anymore, lest I find myself on a “slippery slope.”



**Adult
Auditorium
New class
beginning in
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**GOD'S
PLAN OF SALVATION**
Believe—Heb. 11:6
Repent—Luke 13:3
Confess—Rom. 10:9
Be Baptized—
Mk.16:16, Acts 2:38,
1 Pet. 3:21