

R12.2 March 2023 Blog The Day I Fired Walter Henrichsen

Contemplating suicide, Christ invaded my life in 1991. I was 40 years old. God graciously began surrounding me with other Christian men, and I was invited to an annual Christian Study Group associated with the insurance industry. The event was to take place outside Boston in 1993. I had many reasons not to attend, the biggest.... my dad who had recently received Christ, was at in-home hospice care. When I mentioned to him that he might not be here when I returned, he said, "Go..... we will meet up again real soon." When my dad said that, tears welled up in my eyes.

When I arrived at Logan Airport, someone had accidentally taken my luggage, so I arrived at conference center late. Looking through the windows, I knew I was in the wrong place because the men were all singing. My Canadian friend who invited me, saw me standing outside and explained it was a "Bible" study, not an insurance study group, then he brought me inside. There were two teachers, one of them was Walter Henrichsen. When he started teaching, I truly had no clue what he was talking about for I had never heard anyone say those things (at that time I was attending the largest megachurch in Las Vegas). One part of me said his teaching is very important, but the other part was listening to some of the men complaining.

Over the next two years I agreed with what these men were saying, "This man Walter Henrichsen is dividing the Body of Christ and has to go! His words are harsh, and he leaves men bloodied and bruised." I was serving on their executive board at the time, so we voted to fire Walter Henrichsen even though he had been teaching the group for over 20 years. After the vote, I said to myself, "Good, we got rid of that troublemaker!"

In 1999, someone anonymously sent me a blue devotional titled, "[Thoughts From The Diary Of A Desperate Man](#)." I saw that it was written by Walter Henrichsen and said to myself, "What the heck, I'll start reading it." It didn't take long to see that this devotional was hard-hitting but lined up squarely with the Scriptures. I eventually picked up the phone and called Walt. He was happy to hear my voice and I asked him to forgive me for firing him. Graciously he said there was no need, but I insisted. He said of course you are forgiven. Then I said, "We fired you for dividing the Body of Christ with your teachings, that was true, but it wasn't you, it was the Word of God ([Heb 4:12](#)) that divided our group of men." Me and the guys just wanted our ears tickled ([2 Tim 4:3](#)). My relationship with Walt lasted many years, we spoke often, stayed very close, he disciplined me and never let go until two months before his death in 2016. God used this man to radically change my life.

Why is it men back then and especially today desire fluffy, feel-good, Christianity 'Lite' messages? Jesus declared clearly from His own mouth in Matthew 10:34 (NASB95):

*"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth;
I did not come to bring peace, but a sword."*

We are in a war! And wars leave men bloodied and bruised. As the old missionary C.T. Studd (1860-1931) stated, "Every **true** Christian is a soldier, and we are at war!"

Unfortunately, we have a bunch of chocolate soldiers. When things heat up, they melt! We must "Act Like Men!"

Applications:

Walter Henrichsen's messages were not for the faint of heart, but they drove me into the Scriptures. Here are just a few topics that radically changed my worldly thinking to Biblical (eternal) thinking:

- **Hurt** – Only two people in the universe can hurt you, God and you.
- **Testing** – God's unrelenting tests make the world less attractive causing us to long for heaven.
- **People** – It is impossible to have a problem with another person.
- **Slavery** – I was a slave to the world, now a slave to Christ. As His slave I deserve nothing because He has given me everything.
- **Tribulation** – All tribulation, opposition and persecution come from God. It purifies my hope.
- **Prey** – God wants us to give our life as a prey to others (Jer 45:5; Isa 43:4).
- **Fear** – Our fear of God is essential to diminish our fear of man and circumstances.
- **Serving** – We must serve God on His terms, not ours.
- **Now** – What we do now will make an apparent and appreciable difference on what our eternity looks like.
- **Sovereignty & Assurance** – He controls all things, and we have no certainty.
- **Works** – God will render to each person according to his deeds.
- **Accountability** – We will all stand before the judgement seat of Christ to be recompensed (good or bad) according to what we have done.
- **Depart** – Look at all the great things I did for You, Jesus. "Depart from Me, I never knew you!"
- **Great Commission** – It is a command!
- **Decision** – Pick one: Jesus said, "I am with you" or "I will vomit you out of my mouth."

Postscript: A note from one of the men from the Insurance Study Group (April 2017)

"As I was reading through Walt today, I wanted to thank you again for reintroducing me to his devotions. Sometime in the past in my immaturity, which still haunts me today, and I still have a LONG WAY to go.... I thought Walt as "radical" and "over the top" with his theology. It was me not able to take the "big meat" yet by living one foot in heaven and the other in the world.

However, today I like Paul see myself as "not yet attained" and struggle with past weakness. So, His grace is what sustains me!"