

When 900 Million People Are Watching

Ninety-percent of all people deal with some level of stage fright. How do you feel when all eyes are on you? Do your palms get cold and clammy? Do you become nervous and anxious? Do you blush, tremble, shake, or feel nauseated?

There is at least one stage where the vast majority of people feel no fright at all. This stage is Facebook. Facebook recently exceeded 900 million active users. Potentially, then, depending on your privacy settings, up to 900 million people are watching what you say and do. Many who would be very careful in front of a crowd may post on Facebook with reckless abandon.

God has called His people to be different (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Timothy 2:21). God has called us to be a light in the darkness (Matthew 5:14-16). The question for us is, do our Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest accounts reflect this? Here are several categories to consider:

- What Do We Say and Post? Could someone look at our profiles and see bad language, gossip, slander, or crude and crass speech? (2 Corinthians 12:20; James 3).
- What People and Activities Do We "Like" (Support)? Do we "Like" celebrities, athletes, artists, or others with trashy reputations? Do we support movies, music, TV shows, video games, or other things that are not Christlike? (Romans 12:2).
- What Pictures Are on Our Profiles? Do any pictures show us engaging in sin or less than godly behaviors? (Romans 13: 13-14). Do any show us hanging with people or in places a Christians should not be? (I Corinthians 15 :33). Do any pictures on our profiles display immodesty or promote lust? (I Timothy 2:9-10; Romans 13: 13; Matthew 5:28).

Remember, 900 million people are watching on earth, and One is watching in heaven.

- by Brent Petrillo

God Is on the Throne Not on Stage

The God we serve is an august, spiritual being both deserving and desirous of our deepest respect. Though described in Scripture as a friend to man (Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23), He is not some sort of "good buddy" to joke with or about.

Our God is still on the throne (Psalm 45:6); His ways remain higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:9), and His authoritative Word still promises to judge us in the Last Day (Revelation 20: 12).

No measure of self-appointed, flippant familiarity with the God of heaven detracts one bit or whit from His inherent majesty. Our God is eminently worthy of our reverence; thus we must serve Him "acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). Truly, reverence is the "very first element of religion."

Moreover, our periods of public worship should express this spirit of reverence. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all about him" (Psalm 89:7). Worship performed "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) suggests a demeanor of awe and reverence.

We agree that our worship services should be permeated with expressions of joy and thanksgiving - they should not come to resemble a congregational visit to the dentist, but neither should the reverent worship of our heavenly Father be confused for a carnival or rock concert. Regardless of where, when, or by whom the worship is performed - it must be characterized by reverence and decorum. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40).

The worship assembly is not the proper setting for screaming, whistling, clapping, and stomping the feet in response to a speaker's message. We do not gather to pay homage to men but to worship God. We do not come together as we would at football game or a band concert; we come to worship God. We do not assemble with the intent of being entertained; we come to worship God. Any assembly of saints with the intent of worshipping and praising the God of heaven should reject that which emphasizes the carnal emotions and minimizes the spiritual man. An outsider should be able to attend one of our assemblies and see a marked difference between

the worship of God and he Jay Leno show.

In the realm of worship, zeal without knowledge (Romans 10:2) paves a dangerous road toward pagan, flesh-oriented, and riotous assemblies. Most of our denominational neighbors have long gone this route, with services geared more toward entertaining man than worshipping God. May we learn to temper our joy in Christ with a Christlike reverence for things holy. And may we teach our children so.

Remember, our God is on the throne - not on stage.

- by Dalton Key

"Not Given to Much Wine"

We continue to hear some Christians who go to 1 Timothy 3:8 and Titus 2:3 in an effort to justify 'social drinking'. Both of these passages, though addressing different groups of individuals, use the phrase, "not given to much wine". The argument is made that the verses do not condemn drinking, rather only warn about excessive drinking. The idea is (we are told) that a person can drink some wine, but must avoid drinking "much" wine and becoming intoxicated. In fact, these folks would have us to believe that the verses include a clear implication that moderate drinking is approved by God. We deny it!

Does the expression "not given to much wine" give implied consent to drinking of intoxicants up to a certain level? NO!

Consider this illustration: My children have been bathed and dressed in their "Sunday-go-to-meetin' clothes". Before we leave for the services they ask for permission to play outside. I say, "Yes, but don't get all dirty". Think about that statement for a moment. Do you comprehend my meaning? What is implied? Do I mean that they can get a little dirty? Would I be pleased if they got muddy only up to their knees? Of course not! My meaning is that they should not get dirty at all.

And so it is with the expression, "not given to much wine". It clearly prohibits excessive drinking. But to suggest that moderate drinking is approved in these verses is simply illogical and contradicts, other plain Bible teachings. The same flawed logic would lead us to the conclusion that the command "thou shalt not kill" lends endorsement of any violent conduct that ends just short of murder. Who can believe it?

- by Greg Gwin