

Telling Others They Are Wrong

Do you think it is right to tell another person they are wrong in their religious beliefs? Before we answer that let us consider another question - do you think it is right to tell another person they are wrong about anything? Suppose they are driving on the wrong side of the road (you are riding with them in the car). Should you mention to them that they are wrong? Suppose you are in the kitchen and notice the cook about to put poison into the food instead of salt, should you just ignore it?

Now, in both of these cases most (if not all) of us would say we ought to go ahead and tell them a mistake has been made. Why?? Because not to tell them would be to allow them to do something that would put both your life and theirs in some danger.

But when we come to religion we want to view things differently. We don't want to tell anyone they are wrong and we don't want anyone to suggest that we might be. Why the change in attitude? Is not our soul as important as our life? Are we not as interested in believing and practicing the right thing in religion as we are in driving and in cooking? Does not our religion have a greater effect upon us and our destiny than driving and cooking? I believe it does.

Paul told Timothy to "reprove, rebuke, exhort" (2 Tim. 4:2). To reprove and to rebuke means to tell folks they are wrong. It means to point out wherein people err. And Paul was talking about matters of a religious nature. This was to be done with patience and with teaching of the Bible, but it was to be done! If Timothy was to be a good servant of the Lord there would be times when he would have to say to someone, "YOU ARE WRONG".

Would they like it? Probably many of them would not. But it had to be done anyhow. Why? For the same reason you would tell the driver they were on the wrong side of the road. It is dangerous to continue going the wrong way - in religion as well as on the highway. This is why people should be of the disposition to consider what another has to say in spiritual matters. We ought not refuse to listen when someone disagrees with us. We ought to listen.

There is only one way to heaven (Jno. 14:6). There is only one power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). There is only one faith (Eph. 4:5). Do you want to please God??

- by J. F. Dancer

Deep Roots

Have you ever tried to remove a tree or stump from your yard? How about something as simple as a big bush? Where I grew up in California, a quarter of our front yard was full of Junipers. We decided to replace them with a lawn and I still remember how much work was involved for that to be accomplished. Even with shovels, and axe, lots of rope and a half-ton pickup, it was still a whole lot of work! Who would have thought it would be so difficult? I sure did not. Strong, deep roots had anchored those bushes firmly in the ground.

In the Bible, godly people are often likened to trees with strong deep roots (Psa. 1:3; Prov. 12:3; Jer. 17:7,8).

The branches of growing trees not only reach higher, but their roots grow deeper. It's impossible for a strong tree to have high branches without having deep roots. It would become top-heavy and topple over in the wind.

The same is true with Christians. It's not possible for us to grow in the Lord without interweaving our roots around His Word and deepening our life in His instructions.

Would you like to be a tall, immovable tree? That comes only through a life of Bible study, discipline, and faith - conditions that produce deep roots.

- by Shane Williams

Taking Inventory of Your Abilities and Opportunities

It has been said that our responsibility to God is in direct proportion to our abilities and our opportunities. That being the case, we need to take a serious personal inventory in both of these important areas.

How can I know what my abilities are?

- Seek wisdom in this matter by study and meditation on God's word, by prayer, and by asking Christians whom you respect.
- Ask yourself these questions:
 - What particular blessings and advantages do I have that others do not have?
 - Which of my possessions can be used in the service of the Lord (money, time, car, house, phone, education, etc.)
 - What do I enjoy doing?
 - What do I do well?
 - What activities give me special satisfaction?
 - What comes naturally to me?
 - What things can I learn to do?
 - What are the areas in which I can improve?

How can I know what my opportunities are?

- Again, study, meditation, prayer, and asking the advise of others will-help.
- You need to answer these questions:
 - What things are being done as a regular part of the work of this local congregation that I have the ability to help do?
 - What things are not being done adequately, or are not being done at all? Can I help to fill this void?
 - What problems exist that I might be able to help solve?
 - What are others doing that I might help them to do?
 - Are there restrictions that I should consider? (i.e., women are limited in public teaching situations, etc.)
 - What other factors (family, work, etc.) must be considered? Can these be arranged to give me greater opportunities?

Let's be sure that every member of this church is working at maximum efficiency!

**adapted from notes by Gary Henry*

- by Greg Gwin