

Let's Just Do What God Says

Religious division is a result of failing to do what the Lord says. It reflects an earthly mindset. The apostle Paul told the factious Corinthians: "for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? For when one says, 'I am of Paul,' and another, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not mere men?" (1 Corinthians 3:3-4).

Look around. Hundreds of denominations exist. They call themselves after men or peculiar doctrines. They engage in a plethora of unauthorized activities because this is what they want. Focus is put upon the social or political. All of this is done supposedly in the name of Christ. However, the Lord says, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness'" (Matthew 7:21-23).

Religion has become so feeling and emotion oriented that to suggest that there are those who are practicing lawlessness "in the name of Christ" is to be mean spirited and unkind. There is no such thing as false worship in today's society. "Tolerance" for all the various ways of "serving God" is the call of today. Shame on us for suggesting that there is a pattern of authority for the worship and work of God's people. Frankly, with an attitude like this, we might as well write our own Bible.

God's will is unity. We are to endeavor for it by following His plan in the Scriptures (Ephesians 4:1-6). We are not at liberty to toss aside any of the teachings of the Bible. Yet, in order for denominationalism and division to exist, tossing aside what God says is exactly what is being done. It's no wonder that the world has responded with disbelief (see John 17:20-21).

Let's just do what God says. That may sound simplistic, but it is still the key to pleasing God and maintaining unity among believers. Let's be just Christians. It can be done - it must be done if we are to please God. May we all examine ourselves, our practices, and our doctrines, and see if we are following God's will. It's in the Book.

- by Doy Moyer

You Can Understand the Bible For Yourself

One of the greatest misconceptions about the Bible is that it is a locked book. The average person is believed to be shut out from comprehending its message. It is thought to be too mysterious, too difficult for the common man or woman to understand.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The apostle Paul was one of the individuals who was chosen to write down the message of Christ for the New Testament. The word of Christ was revealed to Paul by the Holy Spirit. The gospel had been hidden for years like a mystery, but it was now being unveiled for all to see and know. Speaking of the gospel, Paul wrote, "how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I wrote before in a few words, by which when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)," (Ephesians 3:3-4).

The Bible was not written to stump man or frustrate him in any way. Certainly there are sections of it that are challenging and even parts that leave most of us at a loss as to what it is about. Yet, the vast majority of what is found in the Bible is understandable for anyone.

God's supreme intelligence makes the Bible understandable. He knows how we reason and communicate and He has constructed it in such a way that we can comprehend it. It is filled with narrative, illustrations, and colorful language that makes it easier for us to relate to what is being said. Though He is so far above us, God has always been able to connect with man if man was willing to listen.

You don't have to have some special teacher to unlock the secrets of the Bible for you. You may benefit from another's assistance, but you can read the Bible for yourself. You do, however, have to make an effort and invest some time into studying the Bible in order to understand it. Like learning anything new, you will struggle at first. Yet, if you are committed and stick to it, you will soon begin to see it come together. You will discover that the Bible is fascinating and enlightening. You will find that it is understandable and that it is the word of eternal life (John 6:63).

Calvinists Caught In A Trap

There is the idea, taught by Calvinists, that Jesus only died for certain specific individuals. They typically refer to these as “the elect.” Furthermore, it is argued that God “irresistibly” draws these people to Himself. And, finally, that these “elect” ones, having thus been drawn to salvation, will be saved regardless of what they do. One famous quote from a Baptist preacher states it this way:

*"We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul! The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul . . . and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger . . . The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul." **

There are lots of ways to answer this false doctrine, but here is a simple approach that works:

1. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: *"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* (Matthew 6:14,15)
2. Calvinists would have to argue that Jesus was speaking to “elect” individuals, because He indicated that God would forgive their trespasses.
3. But, LOOK, Jesus also indicated that these same people might NOT have their sins forgiven if they refused to forgive others.
4. So, here is a text that catches the Calvinists in a trap:
 - a) If these were really among the “elect,” it would not matter if they forgave others, because God would have to save them anyway – but the text says He will not.
 - b) If these were not among the “elect,” then God would not forgive them under any circumstance – but the text say He will.

* Sam Morris, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Stamford, Texas, as quoted in [The Possibility of Apostasy](#), by C. R. Nichol, pg. 74