

A Dress Code for Worship?

NO! God does NOT have a dress code for worship! Of course He does not! He assumes that a humble worshipping heart will dictate proper attire and behavior. A true spirit of awe, reverence and worship dictates dignity and propriety in dress and demeanor. When we dress appropriately we manifest a humbleness of heart that honors and respects the sovereign God whom we have come to praise and petition.

- *selected*

God's Way

The problem of disinterested people is not new. It existed in some places even in the first century. Paul said it existed in Corinth. "For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:22-23).

Paul had the power to offer signs to the Jews and the knowledge to compete with the Greeks in worldly wisdom. The philosophy described above would have suggested advertisement of a lecture on "The Judaistic Philosophy in the Roman World." Obtaining his audience with this, he could then slip in a little about Jesus and the cross. But this was not Paul's approach, as he told us: "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). Human philosophy and human wisdom had no place in Paul's plan for saving the lost in Corinth.

Preaching only the gospel, of course, Paul could have announced himself as "Dr. Paul, graduate of the University of Gamaliel, noted author, world traveler, inspired and dynamic lecturer." Rather, he says, "And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God ... I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:1, 3-5).

Worldly appeals simply cannot save lost men. And to attach them to the gospel is to cheapen the good news of Jesus Christ. By such appeals we may increase numbers and even "make waves," but such individuals in the local church are liabilities rather than assets. As materials in God's building they are classified as "wood, hay, and straw." Paul warns against building such material into the church: "According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work" (1 Corinthians 3:10, 12, 13).

- *by Sewell Hall*

The Failure of Creeds

"But there are so many creeds, all claiming to be right, that I should not know which to take. They were all made by learned men, and if they can not agree on the kind of a creed, how am I to decide which is right?" says one. It is a matter of great moment and of much relief that, aside from all these conflicting, clashing, and erring creeds, there is one book that all parties concede is right. They all agree that the Bible is right - that it came from God. They all further agree that it contains the law of God - that the law of the Lord is perfect. The only wonder is, that man ever attempted to make any other creed or law for the Church. Such an undertaking could not have commenced without two wicked assumptions:

1. That the law of God, as set forth in the Bible, is not sufficient or is a failure.
2. That the insufficiency or failure can be remedied by weak, erring, and uninspired men.

No man of intelligence will affirm, in plain terms, that the Bible is not sufficient for the government of the saints; or that man - uninspired man - can make a creed that will serve a better

purpose than the Bible. Still such affirmations are implied in every attempt made by uninspired men to make a creed. If you admit, as all are bound to do, that the law of God is in the Bible; that nothing may be added to it, nothing taken from it, and that no part of it may be changed, there is not an excuse in the world for making another law. The law of God in the Bible is the law, the divine law, the supreme law, in the kingdom of God; and it is a treasonable movement to attempt to get up another constitution, law, name, body, or officers, apart from the constitution, law, name, body, and officers as found in the Bible.

But the matter now in hand is to find a safe course to pursue. Can this be done? All admit the Bible is right. All admit that the law of God in the Bible is right. All admit that those who follow the Bible honestly and faithfully, in faith and practice, will be saved. All admit that wherever any creed differs from the Bible is wrong. Then it is infallibly safe to take the Bible and follow it. When men undertake to prove that a human creed is a good one, they argue that it is like the Bible. If a creed like the Bible is a good one, why will not the Bible itself do? If the Bible will not serve the purpose - is insufficient and a failure - a creed like it would be equally insufficient. When men make a creed to do what the Bible would not do, they should certainly make it different from the Bible, or it would serve no better purpose than the Bible itself.

- by Benjamin Franklin

(note: Benjamin Franklin was a nineteenth century gospel preacher, not to be confused with our eighteenth century "founding father.")

Do You Understand? Can You Explain?

Do you understand quantum physics? Do you even know what it is? (Most of us do not.) Now, imagine that you have the task of explaining it to someone else. Impossible! How can you hope to explain what you do not understand yourself?

We hope this illustrates a point we want to make about the Bible. The majority of people in the world mistakenly view the Bible as a confusing and difficult book. Sadly, too many Christians are unable to help resolve this problem because they simply cannot explain what they have never understood themselves. They don't know God's truth well enough to be able to explain it to others.

The Bible can be understood (Ephesians 3:2-5). In fact, we are commanded to understand it (Ephesians 5:17). If we imagine that the Bible is too hard to understand, we are actually casting a charge against God. We are maintaining that He was unable to produce a revelation that the average man or woman can grasp. Not true!

The real problem here is a lack of dedication and a failure to work diligently. Often we find folks - even Christians - who can talk knowledgeably about a wide variety of subjects. They recite technical and intricate details about a host of topics. Yet these same people claim that the Bible can not be comprehended. Nonsense! With even a fraction of the same effort they have put into understanding computers, cars, sporting events and political matters, they would have become expert in their knowledge of God's Word. If they invested one tenth of the time they waste watching television, they would understand even the most complicated themes of the Bible.

It's true that you can't explain what you do not know. However, let us never use this excuse concerning the Bible. If we don't know, it's our fault. Get busy!

- by Greg Gwin