

Respect For God's Authority

The standard of what is acceptable in religion for many is whether it satisfies the individual. Many "shop" for a religion that meets their personal preferences, treating the Scriptures as a salad bar-- picking things they like and passing over others. Many declare satisfaction with the course they have chosen in religion without ever considering the question, "Is God satisfied with my religion?" The whole conclusion is not, serve God as you please, but "Fear God and keep His commandments" (Eccl. 12:13). Our purpose in daily activities and in worship should be to strive to please God. Those who truly seek to serve God will not be satisfied until they do this. We must be willing to test our practices and beliefs to see if they agree with the Scriptures. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2Cor. 13:5).

The only way to please God in all that we do is to follow His revealed will-- to simply read and study the Scriptures and follow them in all we do, not adding to them or taking away (2Jn. 9; Deut. 4:2). Those who fail to do this lack respect for the authority of God as Lord and Master. The inspired apostle declared, "And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord" (Col.3:17). To "do all in the name of the Lord" means to respect the authority of the Lord in everything. We must have God's authority for all that we do and that authority must be established from the Scriptures; for it is there that God has revealed His will for us.

So, our personal morality, conduct, religious beliefs, and things practiced in worship must be based on book, chapter, and verse. One may be satisfied with the manner in which they live and worship, while God may not be, making life and worship worthless before the Lord. As Jesus warned, "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:8,9).

Therefore, let us search the Scriptures to establish authority for all that we believe and practice showing respect God's authority.

- by Paul Smithson

An Important Key in Solving Marriage Problems

There have been times when I have been called in to 'referee' a marital dispute only to realize after hours of discussion that the real solution to the marriage problems was contained in The Golden Rule. If husbands and wives would really absorb what Jesus said and apply it to their situations, many problems would vanish immediately. Is there any husband so bold as to deny that he often acts selfishly, thinking only of his own wants and needs, with little attention to those of his wife? Can any wife deny that a similar blindness on her part is more than a little to blame in many disputes? If each of the marriage partners would 'wear the shoes' of their mates, they would see the need of 'doing unto others as we would have them do unto us' (as it is commonly paraphrased). No marriage counselor on earth could give better advice than to press home the meaning of these words to feuding husbands and wives.

- by Tom Roberts

Hypocrites in the "_____"

"I want no part of religion, because there are hypocrites in the church."

Of all the hypocritical excuses, that one is bound to rank with the most hypocritical of all! To be hypocritical is to be an actor, a pretender. A movie star may act like a doctor, but not actually be a doctor. He may play the role of a lawman, etc., but not be such in real life.

So it is with the one who says, "I won't go to church because there are hypocrites there." He is pretending that this is his reason. But he's only acting. For in real life, he will not resort to the following:

1) "I won't go to the amusement park, because hypocrites go there."

- 2) "I'm not going to the lake, because there are hypocrites on the lake."
- 3) "I'm not going to the football games, because there are hypocrites in the stands."
- 4) "I'm not going to the restaurant anymore, because hypocrites go there."

Hosts of individuals go and enjoy such places and activities. Why? Because they want to do so. Hypocrites sure can't keep them away! But they don't go to church. Why? Because they don't want to go to church. They just pretend as if their reason is because of hypocrites in the church. This pretentiousness is itself hypocrisy.

- by J. Princeton Simons

Making Noise, or Making a Point

All who engage in public speaking – including teachers, politicians, various public officials, AND preachers – have their own unique methods of preparing notes and aids to help them remember the points they want to make while before their audience. Some prefer to have their presentation in a fully written manuscript, while others would rather have a developed outline of what they will say. Still others need only a few scribbled comments on a card. Whatever the style, these visual 'helps' are usually very important for the speaker, and they are closely guarded in advance of the speaking assignment.

We heard of one such orator who allowed his notes to be seen prior to his speech. In the margin of his outline he had written, "Yell louder here, this is a weak point." Think of it – he realized the weakness of what he was going to say, so he hoped to conceal it by making more noise.

Unfortunately, many religious people do this very thing – although it is unlikely that they would actually admit it on their handwritten notes or elsewhere. What they are doing is an attempt to impress men, but we are sure that God is NOT impressed.

This is not a new problem. Jude mentions those who "speak great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (vs. 16). And Paul said that "by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:18).

In contrast, all who would faithfully proclaim God's message must not allow a desire for men's esteem to overwhelm their primary devotion to the truth. Paul described his methods in this way: "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). Peter urged that "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

Let's be sure we are making a true point rather than simply making noise!

- by Greg Gwin