

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

Our Duty Toward Truth

WE MUST LOVE THE TRUTH (2 Thess. 2:10). Before truth can have a positive effect upon one's life, he must have a love for the truth that he might be saved. This will insure that our motives in approaching God are pure and that we are able to discern truth from error (John 7:17). Those who do not have a love for the truth will be deceived by Satan's lies and perish (2 Thess. 2:10).

WE MUST KNOW THE TRUTH (Jn. 8:32; 1 Tim. 2:4). God's word is truth (Psa. 119:142; Jn. 17:17), and He has revealed His truth for man's good (Deut. 29:29). Therefore, unless one would believe God to be cruel and malicious, we must accept that God's word can be understood and known by all who desire such knowledge (Eph. 3:3-4; 5:17). Jesus said "ye shall know the truth" (Jn. 8:32). God desires that "all men ... come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).

WE MUST BELIEVE THE TRUTH (2 Thess. 2:12-13). Believing God is not a blind leap in the dark. His truth is a presentation of evidence designed to bring men to belief (Jn. 20:30-31). Each individual is responsible to weigh the evidence, determine it credible and conclude it believable. Those who disbelieve do so because they do not choose to consider the evidence properly (if at all). Instead, they have pleasure in unrighteousness.

WE MUST OBEY THE TRUTH (Gal. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:22). Because God has given commands, His truth demands an obedient response on our part. Truth is not a spiritual smorgasbord of options for us to pick and choose from. The sum of God's word is truth (Psa. 119:151, 160). Everything He has revealed on a subject constitutes the pattern to be obeyed (Rom. 6:17). Therefore, we are responsible to "handle aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). To neglect just one part of it constitutes sin by which one will perish eternally (James 2:10).

WE MUST WALK IN TRUTH (2 John 4; 3 John 3-4). This Bible reference to "walk" has reference to one's manner of life. The righteous will incorporate God's truth into his life and walk therein.

Whatever the circumstance, he will not compromise it (Prov. 23:23). It will be a "shield and a buckler" for he who takes refuge in God (Psa. 91:4). And, it will be the standard by which he worships God (John 4:23-24).

- by **Dan Richardson**

How Can I Know Who Is Right?

Take a look at the divided religious world around us. Hundreds of different groups are teaching different doctrines and practicing different creeds. To the uninitiated it is surely a confusing and frustrating situation. How can a person know who is right? How can we be sure what God wants us to do? Here are some essential guidelines:

1. Remember that we are searching for God's answer, not man's. Worship is "in vain" when it follows "for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9).
2. God's truth is revealed solely and exclusively in the Bible. Despite many claims to the contrary, no one today has received spiritual truth in any way other than from God's word. ". . . thy word is truth" (John 17:17)
3. Not only is truth found in God's word, but we can have confidence that every bit of truth we need is there. The Scriptures teach us everything we need to be "complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16,17).
4. The Bible says that there are many false teachers in the world, and warns us to "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God" (I John 4:1).
5. Finally, we must be determined to accept God's word, and nothing else. "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:9).

Understanding how important it is to know who is right in matters of religion, it behooves us all to carefully consider what we believe and what we have been doing. Jesus said we can know the truth (John 8:32). Study!

- by **Greg Gwin**