



The Voice of Truth

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Adorning the Doctrine of God

By Jimmy Pettigrew

“That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (**Titus 2:10**). “Adorn the doctrine.” The attitude is the same as that in **1 Peter 2:12**, “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” Christians are exhorted to give glory to God (**Psalms 29:2**). God created us for His glory (**Isaiah 43:7**). God deserves our adoration and praise! Christians are exhorted to give glory to God and support and honor to the gospel of God's grace, by their good works and holy lives.

In Every way Christians will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. By doing this, dignity and honor are given to the gospel of Christ, making it beautiful and attractive. We give dignity and honor to the gospel by:

1. The love we demonstrate (**John 13:34-35**).
2. The forgiveness demonstrated (**Ephesians 4:32**).
3. The compassion shown (**1 Peter 3:8**).
4. A life of holiness and godliness (**Titus 2:11-12**).
5. The stand we take. We must stand for sometime or we will fall for anything (**Ephesians 6:11-14**).
6. Knowing the truth (**John 8:32; Psalm 119:11**).
7. Loving the truth **Psalm 119:47, 140; 2 John 1:6**).
8. Following the truth (**1 John 1:7; 3 John 4**).
9. Putting the kingdom of God first (**Matthew 6:33**).
10. Supporting His cause (**1 Corinthians 16:1-2**).

There is no greater need in this entire world, than for those who are members of the Lord's spiritual body to really live a genuine Christian life in a world that is steep in darkness and sin. What we need is a glow of light from a Christian who's living there life right before God (**Matthew 5:16**). “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” (**Philippians 1:27**). We must live worthily of the faith, the gospel (**Jude 3**). We must stand fast in the faith (**1 Corinthians 16:13**). This should cause each one us to think of his own individual life. We need genuine Christians lives lived by those of us who profess to be followers of the Lord. We need Christians who will make the doctrine of Christ attractive by honoring His word, by loving, obeying following and knowing the truth; by demonstrating love, forgiveness and compassion for one another; by living a life of holiness and godliness! “The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to (fulfil) the lusts (thereof)” (**Romans.13:12-14**).

Nothing in this world hurts the cause of Christ more than hypocritical lives and I'm afraid so often that's what we see. I appeal to you to really live a Christian life. Be a faithful child

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of God! Don't be like those who left their first love (**Revelation 2:1ff**). Be committed to His service, consecrated to Him and to His cause every day! Let us all determined to follow the old paths! Let us all determined to always "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

Minding the Things of Men

By Jonathan L. Perz

The Bible says, "And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men'" (**Mark 8:31-33**).

Imagine receiving such a strong rebuke from the Son of God! The thought of such words from the Lord should be enough to make anyone feel extremely uncomfortable—to say the least! Yet, what was it that Peter said that merited the rebuke, "Get behind Me, Satan!"? Matthew tells us in his account that Peter said, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You," and adds that Jesus declared Peter's words an "offense to Him" (**Matthew 16:21-23**).

At first glance, Peter's words and thoughts seem to be for Jesus' well-being and care. It appears that Peter does not want to lose his Master. However, when we look at the condemnation Jesus expressed to Peter, the picture becomes clearer. Indeed, Peter's concern was for the "things of men" when it should have been directed toward the "things of God." Jesus, who knows the hearts of men, revealed as much.

How many times do we find ourselves more concerned with the things of men than with the things of God? I believe, if we honestly evaluate ourselves, the answer will be alarming.

Have you ever worried more about what someone might think of you for quoting a Bible verse than what God would think of you for spurning the opportunity? As God's vessels, we are to spread the gospel to every creature (**Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:19-20**). Yet, do we allow far too many precious opportunities to slip through our fingers? Do we fear the repercussions of saying what is necessary and end up only saying what someone wants to hear? Indeed, when we worry more about what men will think of us than what God will think of us, we are an offense unto God (**John 12:42-43**)!

Do you fear missing work more than you fear missing worship services? This is not to say that work is not important or that we should not strive to always maintain good attendance at work. Indeed, the Bible says, "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat" (**2 Thessalonians 3:10**). Yet, the emphasis is on the word "more" in the aforementioned question. When we have the attitude that says, "I can miss today's worship service, or this evening's Bible study," what is it we are saying to God? Do we fear our employer's wrath more than God's? Do we enjoy work more than we enjoy worshipping the Creator of the Universe? I would hate to find myself having to answer these questions before God on the great Day of Judgment. The Hebrew writer expresses it best, when he says we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but exhort one another, "and so much more as we see the Day approaching" (**Hebrews 10:25**). Yes, we often mind the things of men more than the things of God!

Do recreation and entertainment take precedence over study and prayer in your life? Once again, we are not saying recreation and entertainment are wrong (though much of what this world offers in these areas is sinful). Sometimes these things are good and necessary. However, many neglect study and prayer in their lives. There is no personal devotion to God manifested in the things they do on a daily basis. For many, to give thanks for their

food during the day is a difficult task to remember. What spends more time in your hands—your television remote or your Bible? Beyond any doubt, these are indicators of our priorities! Surely, the things of God (i.e. study and prayer) should command a more prominent role in our personal lives!

Even on a financial level, we must ask ourselves, *Am I more interested in buying the “things” of men than I am in doing godly and charitable things with my money?* Yes, this is a question that probably strikes to the heart for all of us. In a possession-oriented society such as the one we live in, this mindset is easy to come by. To truly evaluate ourselves on this question, all we need to do is to look around us – at our possessions, our “toys,” our “things.” How does the sum total of their value measure against the generosity, good deeds, and alms we give for others? Paul says, “Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (**1 Timothy 6:6-7**). He commanded the rich to “do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share” (**1 Timothy 6:18**). Indeed these are far more noble and righteous financial pursuits. Consider Cornelius, who Luke says, “gave alms generously to the people” (**Acts 10:2**). Certainly, as we evaluate our financial lives, we can find more ways to mind the things of God over the “things” of men. It was Jesus who said, “Inasmuch as you do to the least of these My brethren, you do it to Me” (**Matthew 25:40**). If this is not a motivator, I do not know what is!

As we consider our lives in light of the Lord’s rebuke of Peter, do we find ourselves deserving of the same rebuke, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of things of God, but the things of men” (**Mark 8:33**)? **If so, we are not without hope!** Let our minds be renewed (**Ephesians 4:23**) and our lives be transformed (**Romans 12:2**). Let us all raise our sights toward heaven and be more mindful of the “things of God.” Begin now, lest it become too late!

A Healthy Church By Dan S. Shipley

I had suspected that we were abusing the word “sound” in reference to churches, preachers and others, but didn’t realize how much until I heard a member tell of having a cousin that was not sound and had to be straightened out on the issues. It was not until later that I learned that “cuz” was ‘a deacon in the Baptist church!

“Sound” suffers no injustice when applied to either people or churches, provided its use is warranted and in keeping with its scriptural sense. God employed this word “hugiaino” to convey the distinct idea of general healthiness and wholeness (**1 Timothy 1:10; 1 Timothy 6:3; & Titus 1:13, e.g.**); therefore we would do well to use it thusly. As physical health is more than merely having a few healthy organs, so spiritual health involves a great deal more than just being straight on whatever the current issues happen to be. Perhaps if we would speak in terms of spiritual health instead of soundness” we would not be so apt to be misunderstood. For instance, I would welcome a “Directory of Healthy Churches”. Trouble is, who would compile the listings? Who outside the local church could say it was healthy and who inside the local church would say it wasn’t.

In the case of the Laodiceans, God has shown us the possibility of a church being blind to its own condition (**Revelation 3**). They saw themselves as being spiritually healthy, having (need of nothing while God saw them as being on their spiritual deathbed “miserable and poor and blind and naked.” Being sick is bad; being sick and not knowing it is worse. Worse, because remedies are neither sought nor received by those who think themselves healthy. If self is to be examined with reference to being in the faith (**2 Corinthians 13:5**), why not the many “selves” who act as one? A little honest introspection will show us that being healthy before God is more than big memberships, big buildings, big contributions, having

“big” preachers and taking “big” stands on issues.

Let us see that a healthy church is one whose members are truly converted to Christ. Not to the church; not to the family or the preacher; but to the Lord! Everything depends on our attitude toward Him! To love Him is to keep His commandments (**John 14:15**); to serve Him is to serve others (**Matthew 25**). He must be the leaven of our lives; we must continually strive to conform to His image and be careful not to repeat the mistake of the Ephesian church by leaving our first love (**Revelation 2:4**).

Let us further see that healthy doctrine is the lifeblood of healthy churches. All members must know and love Bible truth. They don't resent it being preached plainly and forcefully, they love it (**1 Thessalonians 2:10**); they desire it (**1 Peter 2:2**) because they hunger and thirst after righteousness (**Matthew 5:6**)... But they not only love truth, they love each other as taught by Jesus in that truth (**John 15:12**). When Christians are cemented together in a local work by love for the Lord, love for His truth, and love for each other, there will be a striving together to do and be all that God wants—and there will be a healthy church!

The Church is Not

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...composed of people who think they are better than others, but rather those who realize that they should be better than they are and must continually strive to do better (**Philippians 3:12-14**).

...composed of perfect people, but rather those who realize they are following a perfect Lord who revealed a perfect plan in a perfect book (**James 1:21-25**).

...composed of people who never sin, but rather forgiven sinners who acknowledge their faults and forsake them (**Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:8-9**).

...trying to withdraw from everyone, but rather trying to draw everyone into the fellowship of Christ by walking in the light of Jesus Christ (**John 12:32; Mark 16:15-16**).

...trying to set up arbitrary rules to hinder anyone, but rather trying to show the rule of Christ which helps everyone (**Galatians 6:2; 1 John 3:16-18**).

...trying to take the joy out of your life, but rather trying to instill the beauty of holiness and true joy in your life (**2 Chronicles 20:21; Philippians 4:4; 1 Peter 1:8-9**).

...trying to separate you from your money, but rather trying to keep your money from separating you from God (**Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:13-21**).

...trying to rob you of your time, but rather trying to get you to put the priorities of your life in proper order so that you can enjoy eternity (**Matthew 6:33**).

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17