

"A Christian Is Neither Catholic, Jew, Nor Protestant"

By Grover Stevens

Christ's Church is not a denomination, nor any part of denominationalism. It is not Catholic, Jewish, nor Protestant. All denominations (even the Catholics) admit that a person can be saved, can be a Christian, a child of God, in the family of God, and a member of the body of Christ WITHOUT being a member of ANY denomination (including the Catholic).

The Bible plainly teaches that Christ's Church is Christ's Body (Eph. 1:22-23), and that ALL saved people are added to this church by the Lord when they are saved (Acts 2:47). This is the church of which Christ is the HEAD (Eph. 1:22-23), for which Christ DIED (Eph. 5:25), which was purchased with His BLOOD (Acts 20:28), in which the HOLY SPIRIT dwells (1 Cor. 3:16-17), of which Christ is the SAVIOUR (Eph. 5:23) and to which the Lord adds the SAVED (Acts 2:47).

(Acts 2:41-42), and rendered service to the needy saints (Acts 2:44-45) WITHOUT joining ANY denomination. They were simply Christians (Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16) -- not Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, etc. (Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 1:12-13). They were members simply and only of Christ's Church -- the church to which God added them -- the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16). Does it seem unreasonable to you that even though 19 centuries have passed by and in spite of the confusion and chaos of present day denominationalism, that Christ's church is in existence today in the same faith and form that it was during the days of the Apostles? This is exactly what the church of Christ is today! Yes, you can be JUST A CHRISTIAN, a member of the Body of Christ, His church, WITHOUT being a member of the Catholic Church, or the Baptist Church, or the Methodist Church, or ANY other denomination.

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

This church met together and worshipped God (Acts

Things That Impress Visitors

1. Members that day dream or sleep through sermon; talk during observance of the Lord's Supper.
2. Members that open a bottle of pop during services which makes a noise each time it opens.
3. Scribbling in and playing with the hymnals.
4. Members who whisper, talk, write notes, and pass pictures, etc. during services.
5. Members who are privileged to serve during the worship, but are so over medicated that they sound drunk.
6. Persistent late-comers who disturb and distract the worshippers.
7. Members who do not speak to visitors.

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

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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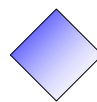


Schedule of Assembly

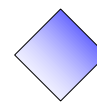
Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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The Voice of Truth



November 7, 2010

Doing What God Says

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The Lord gave Noah specific instructions concerning the material of which he was to build the ark. "Make thee an ark of gopher wood", the Almighty enjoined. In specifying gopher wood, the Lord automatically excluded every other kind of wood. If there were varieties of gopher, as there are of oak, for example, he could have used any or all of these that were suitable for his purpose. But Noah could not use, without bringing the condemnation of God upon himself, any wood other than gopher. A modern "intellectual" among us has ridiculed the idea of God's condemning Noah if he had used a "little cedar" in the ark. Such ridicule betrays a woeful lack of knowledge of the Bible, or of respect for the Bible, or both.

Nadab and Abihu, when they came to burn incense before Jehovah, "used strange" fire which he had not commanded; that is, they did not use fire from off the altar (Num. 16:46). We do not know where they obtained the fire they used. We know at least one place where they did not get it - from off the altar. They may well have rationalized: "Really, what difference does it make where we get the fire; fire is fire; it will burn regardless of where we get it. Why be tradition-bound and narrow? Why not be broad and scholarly? The main object is to burn the incense; and fire from any place will do that". Yes, they tried "strange fire; and fire from Jehovah devoured them" (Lev. 10:2). This example does not suggest that God would have done nothing to Noah by way of punishment if he had used some other kind of wood than gopher in building the ark. It

is recorded of Noah that "According to all that God commanded him, so did he". Evidently, Noah had a better idea of what is obedience to God than some moderns. The same principle in Noah's obedience to God's command is involved in our relation to God's will now.

For example, we are commanded to "sing" in the worship of God (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:10; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15). God did not say, "Make music". If He had, then instrumental music would have been acceptable. He specified singing. He did not say, "Make vocal music". If He had, then there would have been some ground for "whistling" and "humming" in the worship of the Lord. But since inspiration has specified "singing", "whistling" and "humming" have no more place in the worship than cedar wood in the ark; or "strange fire" in the burning of incense.

We should be satisfied with what God has commanded. It is true that the nations around us whistle and hum; but that is no reason why we should. Israel wanted a king to be like her neighbors; but that desire brought disaster.

"Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition" (1 Cor. 10:11). "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). Will we profit by what was written aforetime? ♦

Serving God

By Jimmy Pettigrew

How are we to serve God? We are to serve God "with a perfect heart and with a willing mind" (1 Chronicles 28:9); God deserves our service. Think of all He has done for us: He gives every good and every perfect gift (James 1:17); He gave us Christ and the cross and eternal life (John 3:16-17); He gave us a plan of salvation; All spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3); God is worthy of your service.

How are YOU serving God??? We are to serve with a perfect heart, a loyal heart! This means you are to serve Him with a heart that is attuned to His will. "Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day" (1 Kings 8:61). We are not to give half-hearted

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service; it makes my Lord sick (**Revelation 3:15-16**). I have seen so many so-called Christians try to hold on to God with one hand and the world with the other. Esau could not have the pottage and the birthright; we cannot have both heaven and the pleasure of sin. I want us to give God whole-hearted service, with no turning back.

Also, we are to serve Him with a willing mind. This

“All Things Are Relative!!”

By Jarrod Jacobs

Have we heard folks justify their behavior based on the thinking that all actions, and even our morality itself is “relative”? What did they mean? Put simply, they are trying to say that there are no objective standards in this life, and that the only standard for right and wrong is the standard we personally establish in our lives. In other words, something may be wrong in my eyes, but right in yours, and we are all supposed to accept each other’s opinions as valid. It is from this thinking that we hear phrases like: “your truth,” “my truth,” or “your reality” and “my reality”.

This type of thinking has had an adverse effect on the Lord’s church as well. I have heard of some brethren saying they are “strong enough” to engage in some questionable behavior, while others are not. Please understand, the Bible addresses some Christians as being “strong” and “weak” (**Rom. 14**). However, what is under consideration are those things that are matters of personal liberty where “*there is nothing unclean of itself all things indeed are pure*” (**Rom. 14:14, 20**).

Thus, such things as are mentioned in **Galatians 5:19-21**, **I Corinthians 6:9-11**, and other places are not included in the discussion found in **Romans 14**. Yet, when brethren try to justify their actions, saying they are “strong” and others are “weak”, they are often trying to justify actions which would fall into **Galatians 5** or **I Corinthians 6**, rather than **Romans 14**.

Let us look at the relative reasoning some folks use in justifying their behavior and contrast this with the true standard, the Bible (**I Pet. 4:11**; **Prov. 22:28**).

Some Condone In The Home Things They Condemn In Public.

Some today will engage in sinful actions, and justify the actions by saying, “It was done in our home.” For example,

means our service is to be voluntary, with a mind that desires only that which will please God (**Acts 20:19**). This service involves every area and all particulars of life, job, the home and vacation. It involves every human relationship. God comes before family (**Luke 14:26**). He comes before sports and entertainment.

Are you serving God right now? Are you serving Him with a perfect heart and willing mind? ♦

people watching movies with sexual content (see **Matt. 5:28**), foul language (see **Eph. 5:3-4**), graphic violence, etc., (see **Ps. 101:3**) have been heard to justify this by saying, “This was at home,” or, “We waited until the children went to bed to watch it.”

To this, I can only respond the way the apostle Paul did: “*Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you...*” (**Rom. 2:21-24**).

How many have shown themselves to be the wrong example toward others in the world because they condoned things in the home that they condemned in public? Do we leave people with the impression that there are no absolutes, or that there are “double-standards”?

“Look At All The Good Accomplished.”

When Satan finds an excuse that is effective, he continues to use it! It is this way with the excuse, “Look at all the good accomplished”. This excuse has been used in the past to justify the practice of church-supported orphan’s homes, and other unauthorized church organizations. It is still used today by people to justify their sinful behavior.

To give us an idea of how old this excuse is, do some study in the book of Romans. We find in Romans that there were some who thought that since they had been saved from sin by the grace of God, then they could continue to sin and receive even more grace (**Rom. 6:1-2**). Of course, this was not true at all. Others accused the

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apostle Paul of saying, “*Let us do evil that good may come*” (**Rom. 3:8**). He adamantly denied this charge!

I have heard folks justify some of the basest behavior because of some supposed “good message” that can come from it. This is wrong! “Relative” thinking is taking us farther away from God and closer to Satan! Do we not understand that we could justify any sin we like, whether it be adultery, murder, stealing, etc., when we base these actions on the relative reasoning, “Look at the good that can be accomplished”.

“I Don’t See Anything Wrong With It.”

How many false ideas and false doctrines have been justified through this statement? Just because you or I do not see anything “wrong” with a situation or practice does not make it right!

Simply put, it really doesn’t matter whether or not “I see anything wrong with it”. The true test of right and wrong is determined by “*What saith the scripture?*” (**Rom. 4:3**). God’s word has been given to us for our learning. It provides us with all we need to live a godly and peaceful life in the sight of God (**II Tim. 3:16-17**; **II Pet. 1:3**). When we rely upon our own wisdom and understanding, this is when problems arise personally, in the home, at work, in the church, etc. Yet, isn’t this what “relative” thinking is? It is a choice or choices men make based upon their experience and wisdom rather than by God’s word! How truly foolish one is who justifies his behavior in any of the ways we have listed in this article!

The reasoning, “I do not see anything wrong with it” does nothing but soothe the consciences of those folks who are engaged in sinful practices.

What Can We Do?

Having studied some of the problems when people rationalize behavior based upon relative thinking, what can we do to overcome this problem?

Can You Imagine?

- 1. Paul saying:** “You don’t have to obey the gospel to be saved?” Read **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**.
- 2. Paul saying:** “We are sprinkled with him in baptism?” Read **Romans 6:4**.
- 3. Jude saying:** “I don’t think it is right to argue the scriptures?” Read **Jude 3**.

First, resolve to only speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent (**I Pet. 4:11**). Secondly, remember Jesus’ example was left for us to follow. His example covers all facets of life (**Col. 3:17**; **I Pet. 2:21-22**). Therefore, follow Him!

Let us determine to think on things that are pure, holy, and right (**Phil. 4:8-9**; **Matt. 15:18-20**). Our problem is that we have become desensitized to the sins around us (**I Tim. 4:1-2**). Once we become “sensitive” again, we will not allow ourselves to be in situations conducive to sin (**Dan. 1:8**). When the time comes that we slip up (**I Jn. 1:9**), we will not try to justify our actions by making excuses for sins; but will humbly repent and ask God for forgiveness (**Acts 8:22**). Let us think on the things that are virtuous and worthy of God’s praise; not the things that are hidden and unworthy of God’s praise.

What can we do? We can show ourselves to be the right examples to those around us (**Matt. 5:14-16**). Parents, show your children how to act (**Eph. 6:4**; **Col. 3:21**). Be the proper role model for them. Let them see how a Christian acts and presents himself to the world.

Yes, there are many things we can do to combat the problems associated with relative thinking. The question is: Will we do it??

Conclusion

Let us not be unwise, but understand God’s will (**Eph. 5:17**). Let us understand that God’s word is absolute and I must live by His word alone (**Jn. 17:17**). Let us beware of Satan, who, “*as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” (**I Pet. 5:8**).

The Bible teaches us that we are to be holy as God is holy (**Matt. 5:48**; **I Pet. 1:15-16**). How can we ever be like this when we are excusing our behavior with relative reasoning? Think carefully about this. Let us stop falling for Satan’s lies. Bible truth is objective. It is concrete. Therefore, let us listen and obey His word and encourage others to do the same. Heaven awaits us when we do (**Rev. 22:14**)! *Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦*