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# Words of Truth

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## If I Am An Extremist...

By: Brian A. Yeager

On more than one occasion I have been told that I am an extremist. I have been told this by people who are admittedly "liberal" and also by people who claim to be "conservative". Those of us who are just faithful Christians understand that these labels (liberal and conservative) really do not mean anything. As Christians, we are expected to be liberal in some ways (i.e. II Corinthians 8:1-4; 9:12-13) and conservative in some ways (i.e. Romans 14:21-23). The word of God does teach us to label people who are false (Romans 16:17-18; cf. Acts 13:8-10) or faithful (Philippians 3:15-17; cf. Romans 16:1-4).

When someone calls another an extremist they are trying to establish that person as someone who holds a fanatical view. They are saying, for lack of better terms, that this person has gone too far right or too far left of the truth. Through the Scriptures we learn that we are to neither go right or left of the truth (Deuteronomy 5:32, Joshua 1:7-8, Proverbs 30:5-6, Mark 7:1-9, Galatians 1:6-12, Galatians 3:1, Galatians 5:7-9, II Timothy 1:13, and Revelation 22:18-19). What we are going to do in this article is find out whether or not we are extremists when we take certain stands that are often seen (by traditionalists; cf. Colossians 2:18-23) as extreme views.

### Are These Extreme Views?

Am I an extremist for believing and teaching that we must withdraw ourselves from every brother or sister in Christ who errs from the faith? If so, what does that mean of Jesus and Paul who made these statements: *"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican... Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us"* (Matthew 18:15-17 and II Thessalonians 3:6)?

Am I an extremist for believing and teaching that we must assemble on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper together (Acts 20:7 and I Corinthians 11:18-33)? Am I extreme in saying that we err if we create a "make up Lord's Supper" for those who did not assemble with the saints to partake since there is no authority for that practice? If so, what does that say about Jesus, Paul, and Peter who have taught that we need authority for all that we say and do? Notice these statements: *"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world... And what soever ye do in word or deed, do all in the*

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*name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him... If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever” (Matthew 28:20, Colossians 3:17, and I Peter 4:11)?*

In adding to the point above, am I an extremist for saying we will go to Hell for erring in just one point? If so, what does that mean of these inspired statements: *“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all... Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (James 2:10 and II John 9)? Wouldn’t these things put you in Hell (II Thessalonians 1:7-9)?*

Am I an extremist for believing and teaching that we must be aware of false teachers? If so, what does that mean of Jesus, Paul, and Peter who made these statements: *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves... Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ... But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not” (Matthew 7:15, Colossians 2:8, and II Peter 2:1-3)?*

Am I an extremist for believing and teaching that we must teach, practice, and believe the same on all things? If so, what does that mean about these words of Jesus, Paul, and John: *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me... Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment... But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (John 17:20-21, I Corinthians 1:10, and I John 1:7)?*

Am I an extremist for believing and teaching that we must be sinless to be saved? Again, if I am an extremist for believing and teaching this point what does that mean of Jesus, Paul, and Peter who said these things: *“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect... Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God... But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation” (Matthew 5:48, II Corinthians 7:1, I Peter 1:15)?*

### **Conclusion**

If I am an extremist for holding the views we’ve addressed in this article; then so are Jesus, Paul, Peter, James, John, etc. Brethren, that is a good group of men to be in the camp of (Ephesians 2:19-22). The Bible tells us to follow the approved examples of these men, let’s not forget that (I Corinthians 11:1, Hebrews 6:12, and I Peter 2:21). If they are extremists, then so let us be as well!