
Words of Truth

Can We Disagree And Just Let The Lord Sort It Out?

By: Brian A. Yeager

There have been many times over the years wherein I have seen doctrinal disagreement, which is division (John 9:1-17 and John 10:1-21), ignored amongst supposed "brethren". Those discussions often end with various statements. Some have said: "We'll just have to agree to disagree." Others have said: "Let's just call it a matter of opinion". Many have said: "We are not going to agree so let's just let God sort it out in the end." All of those statements make all parties who agree to them lost, headed for eternal damnation.

Unity, meaning "being one", is necessary for us to please God (Psalms 133:1, Matthew 12:30, Matthew 12:46-50, Luke 11:23, Acts 2:46, Romans 12:16, Romans 15:6, I Corinthians 4:17, II Corinthians 13:11, Philippians 1:27, Philippians 2:1-2, Philippians 3:16, and I Peter 3:8). Contrary to many false conclusions, this means we are to agree in how we think and what we say. Notice: "*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*" (I Corinthians 1:10).

The necessity of agreement on the will of God is so stressed in the Scriptures, that we are forbidden from being hospitable to those of differing minds. Notice: "*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. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds*" (II John 1:9-11).

Any honest person, capable of reason, that reads the Scriptures we have already covered should be capable of understanding that disagreement is wrong. Lest some jump to Scriptures such as the fourteenth chapter of the book of Romans, we should note something about those Scriptures. Even when it comes to authorized liberties wherein we may practice something different and still be unified, we still cannot agree to disagree. Notice: "*Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, **but not to doubtful disputations**. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him" (Romans 14:1-3). If you read through the whole context (Romans 14:1-15:7), you see clearly that we can practice different things on eating certain foods, celebrating different customary days, etc.; but we MUST agree that those things are lawful. If one begins to forbid a lawful liberty that person is false and cannot be ignored (I Timothy 4:1-5).*

True unity leaves no room for differences amongst us. We are to be just as unified as God the Father and God the Son (John 17:20-23). To ignore those instructions is to reject the words of

our Lord. There is sure punishment for such an action (John 12:48). Therefore, we must understand that if there are differences amongst us, we have to resolve them rather than ignore them.

Rather Than Ignore Differences, We Have To Diligently Resolve Them

Consider these Scriptures: *“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all”* (Ephesians 4:1-6).

The word “endeavouring” is a word we have to pause to think about as it relates to our study. The word translated “endeavouring” is the Greek word “σπουδάζω”. It means: “to use speed, i. e. to make effort, be prompt or earnest:— do (give) diligence, be diligent (forward), endeavour, labour, study” (Strong’s # 4704). Consider another Scripture has that same Greek word translated as “labour” (Hebrews 4:11). The meaning of the word and the usage of it in other Scriptures show us that unity takes diligent work. Isn’t that the opposite of ignoring a difference?

When Paul knew about a difference between himself and Peter, notice what Paul did and consider how such is an example for us (I Corinthians 11:1): *“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid”* (Galatians 2:11-17).

Conclusion

When a brother or sister in Christ is walking, talking, believing something other than the truth he or she is in error. We are to think, speak, and act in accordance with the will of our Lord revealed through His word (Matthew 12:34-37, II Corinthians 10:5, Colossians 3:17, and I John 2:3-6). Consider this inspired statement: *“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”* (Isaiah 8:20). If there is no light in a supposed brother or sister in Christ, where does that leave us? Notice: *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”* (Ephesians 5:11). Clearly, we cannot wait till the end to act on differences or in the end all parties involved will be damned.

Milkshakes

Defending The Truth And Exposing Error

By: Brian A. Yeager

The house of God, which is the church of the living God, is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Timothy 3:15). Faithful Christians are the house of our Lord (Hebrews 3:1-6). Therefore, it is our work as the church of our Lord to support the truth. That is a great responsibility. Additionally, as Christians, we are taught this: *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Jude 1:3-4).

The Apostle Paul said he was set for the defense of the gospel (Philippians 1:17). He said that because the Gospel is often under attack. We are very much now, as then and always as long as the earth stands, in the fight of the faith (I Timothy 6:12). Since the beginning of mankind’s existence, the truth has been under attack (Genesis 3:1-5). The same means that Satan used in the garden to beguile Eve is still being employed today by those whom stand in opposition to the truth (II Corinthians 11:3-4).

In our individual and collective efforts to stand in defense of the Gospel, we are going to have to publicly identify those whom stand contrary to the truth. Notice the command to do so and why: *“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple”* (Romans 16:17-18).

If we as individuals avoid exposing someone in error and continue to have fellowship with them, we are in error (Ephesians 5:6-11). This holds true for us collectively as a congregation as well. Notice what the Lord said to the congregation in Pergamos: *“But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth”* (Revelation 2:14-16). As you have just read, by the congregation in Pergamos having people in their midst who held (doesn’t said they taught it) a false doctrine made the whole congregation err and needed to repent of such. We do not want to become partakers in the evil of others by being complacent (I Timothy 5:22; cf. Joshua 7:1-26).

As God’s people we are to love the Lord and the truth (Mark 12:30 and II Thessalonians 2:10). As we have briefly addressed in this study, this will mean we will defend the truth. What we have not addressed is how this fits into the mindset we should have towards faithfulness and unfaithfulness. A proper study of the Scriptures teaches us that a love for the Lord and His truth also means we will have the opposite mindset towards sin and sinners. This will be the area we address in our next study for it is vital in how we think as Christians.