

## Arguing & Debating — Right or Wrong? Good or Bad? — concluded

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by Bill Crews

... or personal satisfaction, or to hold another in contempt merely because he disagrees with us — but these things are not part of proper or honorable argument.

Under “debate” in **Webster's New World Dictionary** we find such definitions as “to discuss opposing reasons, argue,” “to take part in a formal argument; to be a debater,” “to consider reasons for and against,” “discussion of opposing reasons; argument,” “the art or study of formal debate.” Again, there is nothing wrong with those things described in these definitions. However, one statement made is this: “(Obsolete) to fight or quarrel.” That kind of “debating” is wrong, and the right kind of debating, like the right kind of arguing, is too often subject to much human abuse.

The Bible is filled with arguments for truth and righteousness and against error and unrighteousness. The Bible is filled with arguments, reasons, evidences to lead us to believe in God or in Christ and to accept the word of God. The prophets of the Old Testament, Christ Himself, the apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers of the New Testament argued and debated with Satan, false prophets, false teachers, wayward brethren, and any who advocated error or opposed truth. How else can truth be presented and advanced and error be exposed and defeated? Teachers of the truth, or those who sincerely believe they are teaching the truth, **do not** fear investigation, argument, debate. But teachers of error or those who are in doubt or those who are dishonest do. If you are really interested in learning what the Bible has to say on these things, read Matthew 4:1-11; 15:1-11; Mark 7:1-13; Matthew 22:15-46; 23:1-36; Acts 7:8-10; 9:28-29; 13:44-47; 15:1-29.

Now does anyone really believe that it is wrong to argue or debate Bible subjects? When two people who have opposing views on Bible subjects can come together with Bibles in hand, with respect for each other, with reverence for God's word, and calmly present their views and the passages they believe support them, each listening to the other, each being allowed to answer any arguments made and to present his own arguments, each being honest and granting the other to be honest, each sincerely seeking the truth, each refusing to become angry or ugly, only good can come of it.

But remember also that men who teach what is false and know that it is false, men who are dishonest and unfair and have bad tempers must be opposed with the truth. For the sake of any whom they may mislead, they must be resisted and debated. Please read 1 John 4:1; 3 John 9-10; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 12-15; Acts 20:29-30; Ephesians 4:14; Jeremiah 14:13-14, 23 and Titus 1:10-11.

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