

My Church Says I'm O.K.

by Wayne Goff

In a series of lessons I have been preaching lately, I have challenged my audience to examine their own personal beliefs to make sure they actually line up with God's Word. One of the saddest truths is that many of God's would-be disciples have been led astray by false teaching, false ideas, and false practices. We often compare ourselves — not to God's Word, but to our local church — and assume that if we are okay in the eyes of the members where we assemble, then we must be okay with God. But there are flaws in that kind of thinking.

Not Every Church Is Right With God

You only have to read Revelation 2-3 to see that once faithful churches of Christ fell into disfavor with the Lord. Even the mighty church of Ephesus was rebuked by Jesus for having *"left your first love"* (2:4)! If that was true of them, then it could be true of any church of Christ today! The very thought should make us shudder. The church at Pergamos tolerated those who held to *"the doctrine of Balaam"* and the *"doctrine of the Nicolaitans"* (2:15)! Such tolerance was hated by the Lord, and He rebuked them for not fighting against them. Thyatira allowed a *"Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess"* to teach and seduce some disciples to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols (2:20)! But apparently the church permitted these things, and some thought that they were just fine!

All of these churches were warned by Jesus to **"repent"** or else He would take away their Divine identity (2:5, 16, 21-22).

The point I am making is that just because your local church accepts what you believe and practice does not mean that it is right. Sometimes even good churches have deceived themselves. So we must all go back and *"search the Scriptures"* (Acts 17:11) to see if we stand on the Promises of God!

Not Every Christian Is Right With God

The apostle Paul told the Corinthians to **"examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you are disqualified?"** (2 Cor. 13:5). Yet I have heard some Christians defend their own disobedience by the unfaithful saints at Corinth! You see, one can easily be misled or deceived into thinking that what they are doing is right because nobody has challenged them. "Everybody else is doing it" — so we think that's the standard. Good brethren need to realize that they can easily be **deceived** into thinking that their beliefs and practices are right because that's how it's done in this generation, or in this country, etc. **New Testament Christianity is not a product of Twenty-first Century America!**

Jesus warned us of the danger of believing that we were right simply because we did something in *"His Name"* that was actually unauthorized, Matthew 7:21-23! It will be a shock to some to learn their fate! Notice Jesus' words: **"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My father in heaven"** (v. 21). Do you see the **standard**, dear reader? It is the will of God, the New Testament, that will determine right or wrong.

Since we might easily be deceived by ourselves or others, Paul exhorts us to *"examine ourselves."* **Put your faith to the test, subject it to trial, compare it to the unerring Word of God!** Only then can you be sure that you are on solid footing with the Lord! A few examples might be applicable to you:

1. **Social Drinking**
2. **High School Prom**
3. **Euphemisms**
4. **Immodest dress**

It is not "what does my church permit?" but "what does Jesus Christ accept?"

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