

## Religious Tolerance

There is a lot of confusion in the religious world today about who or what is right. Then, there is the question of how one should react to the beliefs and actions of others. The common accepted attitude toward this religious confusion is to be “tolerant” of all faiths and not to condemn the beliefs of anyone. Who has the right to say that someone else’s opinions are right or wrong? Many have accepted a diversity of beliefs even within Christianity. However, there are problems with this idea of “religious tolerance.” One cannot simply accept what one wants to believe is right. The important thing is to be measured up to God’s standard in order to be accepted of Him on the Last Day. It is important not only to study God’s Word for oneself, but also to share this knowledge with others.

God only has one acceptable standard based on the Word of God. There must be a clear standard of right and wrong in order for mankind to know how to please Him. Otherwise, man would be left in a state of moral confusion. How could God judge mankind at the end of time without a clear moral standard? Also, to believe that people can serve God in their own way suggests that there are multiple ways to heaven. However, the Bible states that there is only one way and that it is through Jesus. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (**John 14:6**). God only has one way with only one acceptable standard to make it to heaven and desires for everyone to be clear about what it is.

Being “tolerant” of beliefs other than the doctrine of Christ works against His desire for the unity of His church. In **Ephesians 4:3**, Paul exhorts the church to endeavor to “keep the unity of the Spirit.” However, unity involves more than just “coming together” as a group. In order to have true unity, there must be a unified mindset. It is the will of God that Christians “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (**Philippians 1:27**). Christians must come together in agreement on the doctrine of Christ. The doctrine cannot vary based on man’s opinions. God’s people cannot effectively work together if they are divided. Diversity of beliefs is a hindrance to the cause of God. The church is the strongest with God’s people “striving together” in “one spirit” and “one mind” working for the common goal of “the faith.”

There comes a time when even an average Christian has to stand up for what’s right. Often, society expects an individual to tolerate all other opinions and many are condemned for taking a stance. However, it goes against a Christian’s nature to condone what God is against. In addition, sometimes it is not enough to simply “tolerate” it. Upon salvation, one desires to support the cause of God. This often requires boldness to speak out against actions and beliefs that go against God. There are many examples in the Bible of individuals who had to take an open stand for God. The apostles, Paul, and Jesus Himself are a few examples of prominent people who stood for God’s agenda even beyond their own experiences. They could have ignored those around them; however, they looked beyond themselves and allowed God to use them mightily. At a time when many are afraid to stand up for morality, Christians are responsible to encourage the principles in God’s Word.

Concerning “religious tolerance,” it is important to recognize that God does have only one acceptable doctrine taught in the Word of God that will be used to judge mankind on the Last Day. Judgment according to His standard will determine man’s eternal destiny. God’s

church must be unified concerning the doctrine of Christ. It is dangerous to believe that anyone's beliefs are right and that no one has the authority to say otherwise. It sounds good to say that no one should speak against anyone else; however, is that really true? The natural instinct of a Christian causes them to warn someone else if that person is acting based on beliefs that could have eternal consequences. A Christian both desires and is responsible to let others know that God does have a clear standard that He is willing to reveal through the Bible.