

## WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN

When Peter and John were brought before a council of the Jews for teaching Jesus, they were commanded to “not speak at all nor teach in the name Of Jesus” (Acts 4:18). Their response to that command was: “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye” (Acts 4:19). They continued to teach salvation in Christ Jesus and a short time later they were again standing before these Jewish leaders who said, “Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us” (Acts 5:28). Their response this time was: “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). On a side note here, remember that when Pilate sought to release Jesus and washed his hands before them saying that he was innocent of the blood of this just man, they said, “his blood Be on us, and on our children” (Matt. 27:25). It matters not if it is the word of religious leaders or the government of a nation, if there is a contradiction between what God has said in His word and what these mere men are saying, we ought to obey God rather than men. Let us briefly consider three examples wherein the proper decision in this matter is seen today and in our land.

Jesus said, “Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, comitteth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Matt. 19:9). One would have to have help in order to misunderstand what God has said on the issue of marriage, divorce and remarriage. However, there is plenty such help available. Religious leaders abound that will gladly marry a couple where one or both have been divorced for reasons other than the one God allowed. Civil laws have been enacted that provide this freedom as well. Yet, we ought to obey God rather than men.

God’s word is clear concerning homosexual behavior (Rom. 1:26-27). Relatively recent are the laws of our land giving the right of marriage to people of the same sex. Also, one does not have to look far to find churches that condone such and embrace these living in wickedness as part of their family.

The Bible clearly denounces murder. Murder can be defined as the intentional taking of innocent human life. Since the early 70’s literally millions of babies have been murdered in abortions. The law and often religious leaders condone and support the action. Obey God!! *Tilis*

## HOW FAR WILL SINCERITY WITHOUT TRUTH GET YOU?

A great number of people believe that whatever one does in the realm of religion in general and Christianity specifically is pleasing to God and right within itself so long as it is believed and practiced with all sincerity of heart. It will be our goal in this brief article to show the fallacy of this belief and that sincerity without truth will result in eternal damnation.

Let us first however understand that this is not an either/or proposition. In other words, sincerity of heart is an absolute requirement if our service to God is to be pleasing in His sight. When Jesus told the woman at the well that one who worshipped God would have to worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24), He laid out the necessity for sincerity of heart and the truth of God's word. Paul made the statement, "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). To make an either/or issue is just the same as some do with faith and works. Salvation does not come as a result of faith without works, nor does it come as a result of works without faith. Another illustration that I have personally seen is that some will say that it takes more than attending worship services to be a faithful Christian, then use this as an excuse to not attend worship services. It does take much more than attendance to the worship services, but one cannot be a faithful Christian without attending worship services if able.

When brought before the high council of the Jews, Paul stated, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1). Later he told Felix, "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16). Paul had at all times acted out of a sincere heart toward God, but Paul was sincerely lost until he learned and obeyed the truth.

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always" (Acts 10:1-2). There can be no doubt of the sincerity of this centurion. However, he was lost and needed to hear words by which he and his house could be saved (Acts 11:14).

Many other examples could be cited that show that sincerity without having knowledge of the truth and having not obeyed that truth will get one nowhere but to eternal destruction!

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