

How One Ought To Conduct Himself In The Household of God

by Hendrik Joubert

For the majority the church of God is an abstract and invisible number recorded in heaven, made up of the saved among the members of the various denominations – the churches among men. How we choose to recognize God does not really matter; as long as we admit that He is God and that He is worthy of worship. *Ultimately we worship the same God, each of us in his own way.* Some would even argue that the church is an insignificant *option* as *no church can save you, only the blood of Christ.*

A variety of doctrines by which one may initiate a relationship with God and worship Him is presented, in spite of Jesus demonstrating an eternal principle by quoting what God said through the prophet Isaiah: "BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN." (Matthew 15:9; 2John 9) Those who would suggest that God accepts only worship presented as He directs through the Scriptures, are considered sectarian and false teachers. Ignoring what Jesus says in **Matthew 7:13-14** the way that *leads to life* is considered *broad* so that some would include even those who worship God other than through Jesus Christ. (John 14:6) Perhaps even the atheist will make it, if he is a *good* person. *Who are we to judge?*

Matthew 7:1 is abused as many fail to *read the statement in its context*; a cliché often used to escape what the Bible says. Failing to recognize God's words as the standard, these individuals end up judging the Word. The Son of God says the way is *narrow* (**7: 13-14**) and only those who do as His Father directs, will be the *household of God.* (**7:21-23**)

Even a casual reading of the New Testament should raise eyebrows. A *hunger and thirst for righteousness* (**Matthew 5:6**), that instinctive desire for the *pure milk of the word* (1Peter 2:1-3), will cause alarm. Warnings such as the following may be found throughout the New Testament: *For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.* ¹⁴ *No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.* ¹⁵ *Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.* (2Corinthians 11:13-15) False teachers are *nice* people who *sneak in unawares* to *turn the grace of God into licentiousness* in order to please the masses. (Jude 3-4)

From the following passage, written with the *wisdom given him* (2Peter 3:15-16), i.e. *by inspiration of God* (2Timothy 3:16-17), it becomes obvious that the church is not merely an abstract number. The church of God consists of people who are solemnly charged to conduct themselves as God directs: *I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; ¹⁵ but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.* (1Timothy 3:14-15)

The word of God is a two edged sword (**Hebrews 4:12**), cutting even those who consider themselves churches of Christ and therefore also the church of God. The solemn exhortation is not directed at an abstract number in heaven, it is directed to *the church of God which He purchased with His own blood* with qualified men to shepherd it. (**Acts 20:28**) The demand for proper *conduct* is found in the context of a description of the qualifications for those who wish to act as *shepherds of the church of God*, and those who are to serve as deacons, as well as instructions to the women in this church, all of which is to be obeyed in order to remain God's church.

The display of absolute disrespect in the religious world may lull the church of God into a sense of contentment – we are doing much better. As the churches of men drift farther away from God's standard set in the Scriptures, the church seems more radical and overly conservative, perhaps backwards, even primitive in their thinking. To those on the inside it may serve to *confirm* that we are doing *okay*...for the time being. Then the pressure to seem more enlightened immerses.

To accommodate this some have employed *new hermeneutics* to manipulate what God really meant – a disrespect which is less obvious. The pressure is on the rest who do not want to seem left behind, each drifting at a different pace. Unless we accept the characteristics announced by Jesus in **Matthew 5**, and

repeated over and over again throughout the New Testament, qualities which strip us of any status as initiators of doctrine in God's church, we will find ways to take control of that which belongs to God. We must take care lest we drift. (**Hebrews 2:1-4**)

This church is to be an active defender of the simple truths revealed through the Scriptures – ***the pillar and support of the truth*** – and not a defender of the popular opinion of sinners who will not repent. (**2Timothy 4:3**) The church (the called of Christ, **Romans 1:6**) ***is*** to be ***the light of the world*** and ***the salt of the earth*** demonstrating the power of the gospel of Christ to change sinners into morally responsible, obedient, faithful worshippers of God. We need to control ourselves, and not the word of God. (**2Corinthians 10:3-6**)