



The Tri-Cities Edifier

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“As I teach everywhere and in every church.”

Russ Bowman

1 Corinthians 4:7 — “For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.”

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There is great significance in that observation, particularly as it pertains to the concept of biblical authority. It argues a pattern — that the things we read about in a letter to one congregation are the very things that were demanded in other congregations. The requirements of God did not vary from congregation to congregation. Rather, those churches would have resembled each other. Their worship would be the same. Their teaching would be the same. Their organization would be the same. The aspirations of the members in each church would have been the same. Of course, this assumes the ideal. One group may have faltered in this or that, but what God wanted from them as directed by the apostles would have been the same. The different issues identified in the seven churches addressed in Revelation 2-3 illustrates that each group faced its own challenges. Yet, in objective, God desired the same things from each group.

When we read the New Testament, we can understand what God wants. Because the things He wanted in Corinth were the same things He wanted in Ephesus, or Thessalonica, or Philippi or Rome. God’s Word is no hodgepodge of demands, but rather a record of His admonitions and instructions to different groups of Christians so that all could equally conform to His will. Thus, our churches should worship, think, act, and work just like those churches. We have no right to introduce other arrangements, other kinds of worship, other entities to do our work, nor other objectives pursue. God’s churches today are to be what God’s churches were then. To do otherwise is to defy our Lord. Innovation is perversion — not a facilitation of God’s will. If we can dismiss the patterns found in scripture, then we might as well dismiss scripture altogether. Including what it says about grace, mercy, justice, sin and salvation. We simply do not get to pick and choose.

“As I teach everywhere and in every church.” May we recognize the import of that statement, and give proper respect to God’s revelation.

Citizenship Conflicts

Mark White

Christians are “not of this world” according to our Master ([John 18:36](#)). Of course, necessity demands some involvement in the affairs of earth-life, but we must continually remind ourselves that “our citizenship is in heaven” ([Philippians 3:20](#)). The apostle Peter (1:1) referred to Christians as “strangers” (KJV) or “aliens” (NASB). He wanted them to see themselves as Jesus described them, “not of this world.”

But Christians have to be careful about their behavior among people who ARE of this world. Consider Peter’s instruction further in [1 Peter 2:11-12](#), “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to ... Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe

them, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (NASU) If we are not careful, our behavior among “Gentiles” can be counter-productive to our purpose in the world. Our purpose is to bring glory to God by helping others become citizens of heaven, too.

As difficult as it may be, this means we cannot become so engrossed in earthly concerns to the extent that we lose focus on our heavenly hope. Let the Gentiles be Gentiles, but keep yourselves pure ([1 John 3:3](#)).

You Can, But You Can't

Josh McCord

We live in a time when people often say, “*I can do whatever I want.*” In one sense, that’s true. Especially in America, we’ve been afforded many freedoms. In religious practice, you can do a number of things. You **can** choose your habits, your priorities, and how you live in service to God. God created us with the ability to choose (Joshua 24:15).

You **can** ignore God’s word, but you **can’t** expect spiritual strength without it (Matthew 4:4). You **can** neglect worship, but you **can’t** grow closer to God while drifting away from His people (Hebrews 10:24–25). You **can** live for the moment, but you **can’t** escape eternity (Hebrews 9:27). You **can** sow to the flesh, but you **can’t** reap peace and joy from it (Galatians 6:7–8).

You can believe any doctrine you choose, belong to the church of your choice, and worship God as you please. You have the right to make these choices, but you should understand, you can’t please God while doing these things. “*Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.*” (2 John 9).

Satan has effectively convinced many that religion is determined by personal preference, not by God’s will, and that self-satisfaction matters more than obedience to God. So, you can ignore God’s warnings, refuse His blessings, and reject His great love, but you cannot go to heaven while doing so. “*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. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’* (Matthew 7:21-23)

The bottom line is this; you **can’t** save yourself, but you **can** come to Christ in obedient faith. You **can** repent, confess your faith in Christ, and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). You **can** walk in the light and live with hope (1 John 1:7). May we choose wisely, knowing that our choices determine our destination for eternity.