

## Fence Straddler Or Truth Stander?

Good articles have been written on identifying marks of liberal preachers. But what about brethren who try to hold hands with the faithful and with false teachers? What about those who "straddle the fence" and fellowship both? There are many people who would not agree with some brethren's conclusions on Romans 14, fellowship, and false teachers. Now as far as that goes, that is good. But the real problem is that they refuse to stand against those who are not teaching the truth. Consider the following characteristics of those who are trying to have it both ways:

1. They warn that we should not go to the right hand or the left, but they do not specify what they mean by the "right" or the "left."
2. They caution audiences about extremists without defining who or what an extremist is and why he is an extremist.
3. They are prone to say, "I agree that we should speak against compromise, but we must have the right attitude," but never get around to actually speaking against compromise.
4. They are hesitant to call names like Jesus and the apostles, but are willing to criticize those who do.
5. They have a false piety identical with disingenuous politicians, maintaining an agreeable, pleasant, cheerful disposition with false teachers and compromisers, and never showing the righteous indignation of Paul (Galatians 2:11-14), or Jesus (Mark 3:5), unless they are reprov'd for their "fence straddling."
6. They are fearful of being on the front line of battle of important, current issues among brethren.
7. They defend themselves by saying they have not taught anything false, but knowing they have sinned by not preaching what they should have.
8. They justify false teachers and those who fellowship them by claiming that these have been misunderstood, without defining the misunderstanding.
9. They claim to disagree with certain false teachers, but will only go on

record as saying they disagree with some things these men teach, not that they are false teachers.

10. They speak during lectureships and gospel meetings with false teachers and those who fellowship them, but are careful to make some general remarks about false teaching and compromising (so gullible brethren will think they are courageous soldiers) while extolling love and unity (to keep the approval of liberals and compromisers).
11. They criticize those who oppose compromise because of "the way it was done," but do nothing and offer no answer to the question, "How should it have been done?"
12. They use people like Rubel Shelly and Max Lucado as whipping boys, yet are silent about other men who teach the same as these men and even fellowship men who have worked with them.
13. They are comfortable in the midst of a group of liberals and compromisers but are nervous around brethren who oppose them.
14. They preach lessons on "balance," in which they spend more time rebuking faithful brethren who solidly oppose liberals and compromisers and those who fellowship them, than they spend correcting liberals and compromisers.
15. They justify their silence by claiming to be "balanced."

While some may take offense, the intention of the above points is not to raise anyone's ire, but to provoke all to consider the danger of aligning ourselves with error. We must be like David and "*hate every false way*" (Psalm 109:104, 128).

A very troubling point is that many of these same philosophies were apparent in the institutional controversy. The great prophet of God asked, "*How long halt ye between two opinions?*" (1 Kings 18:21). Is this the way we want to be? Will we do the same or stand for truth?

Adapted From Kerry Duke