

Not Afraid Of Controversy

Preaching the gospel means dealing with controversy. Jesus warned that truth would separate people and cause division (Matthew 10:34-36). It cannot be helped -- it is the nature of truth. Christians must abide in the spirit of Christ and "*contend earnestly for the faith*" (Jude 3).

Paul himself gave us a good example. In Galatians 2:11-14, he recollects a time when he came to Antioch and found Peter playing the hypocrite: "*But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*" He did not run from controversy -- he met it head-on, resolved the issue, and saved Peter and Barnabas from sin.

Too much of religion today is easy, fun, and non-offensive, but this is not the religion of Christ. As one can see with Paul, good can come from conflict. In the face of falsehood, it is time to "*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth*" (Ephesians 6:14). Please do not run from disagreement. Listen to the word of God. You may be saved because of your response to someone's defense of the gospel.

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