

Human Philosophies Of Authority

Introduction. Since Satan first tempted man and sin resulted, man has abused and misused the authority of His Creator. Adam and Eve failed to respect God's authority and that resulted in sin and death (Genesis 3:6). Since that terrible time, all down through the ages mankind has violated God's authority (Romans 3:23; 5:12; 1 John 3:4).

In trying to justify themselves, men have developed a series of human philosophies which they believe vindicates their religious and moral actions. On the contrary, God rejects them (Colossians 2:8, 23; Matthew 7:21-23). We are going to consider some of these philosophies and why they are spiritually bankrupt.

I. **"It Works"**

- A. This philosophy teaches that the ends justify the means. But we cannot do evil that good may come (Romans 3:5-8). This philosophy is condemned by God (Romans 10:1-3).
- B. Saul and the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15 illustrate this philosophy:
 - 1. In vs. 3, the command was given to Saul.
 - 2. Saul was confident that he had performed well (vs. 13).
 - 3. Saul thought he had a great idea in vs. 15.
 - 4. Vss. 18-21 record Saul's rationalization for his sin.
 - 5. God judged Saul for his disobedience (vs. 22-23).
- C. Do you want to base your salvation on the same kind of logic used by Saul?

II. **"We Have Always Done It That Way"**

- A. This philosophy teaches that an action is done because it has been practiced for a long period of time.
- B. In Mark 7:1-13, Jesus contrasts the traditions of men and the commandments of God.
 - 1. A tradition is wrong when men require it and reject God's commands (vss. 8-9).
 - 2. A tradition is wrong when it contradicts God's will (vss. 10-12).
- C. This philosophy elevates man's judgment above God's law! So many doctrines of the Catholic Church have absolutely no basis in the word of God. Their sole authority is the tradition of men.

III. **"The Bible Does Not Say Not To"**

- A. This philosophy puts a premium upon the silence of the Bible. We must be content with what Christ has revealed and be determined not to go beyond that word (2 John 9).

- B. If this is the proper philosophy, then according to Hebrews 7:12-14 the men of Judah could be Old Testament priests! But God had said what He wanted (Numbers 3:10).
- C. So silence does not give consent to us to act on behalf of God. This principle has sometimes been called "the law of exclusion." When we go to a restaurant, we do not have to tell the waiter what not to bring us. Likewise, when God specifies what we are to do, His specific order excludes all other actions that fall into the same category (Acts 15:24).

IV. **"So Many People Cannot Be Wrong"**

- A. I once had someone try to convince one of our members where I used to preach that the institutional church in town was right because of the number of cars in their parking lot.
- B. Consider some examples of this philosophy:
 - 1. In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus said the majority is wrong.
 - 2. In Genesis 6:5-6, the entire human race, except for 8 people, were wrong.
 - 3. In Numbers 14:28-30, only 2 of perhaps millions entered promised land.
- C. This philosophy and logic blatantly bases salvation upon man, pure and simple!

V. **"This Is A Minor Issue"**

- A. Some believe that some issues are not important, or if they follow some important commands correctly, these other "minor" issues will not matter.
 - 1. Did the contribution of Ananias and Sapphira to the poor make up for their lie (Acts 5:1-4)?
 - 2. Did Uzzah saving the ark of the covenant from falling make up for his disobedience (2 Samuel 6:6-7)?
- B. Jesus addressed this very philosophy in Matthew 23:23. Both "majors" and "minors" are important to the Lord.
- C. We will be judged by all of God's word, and not by what we consider "major" and "minor" parts (John 12:48; Romans 2:16).

VI. **"They Are Doing It"**

- A. In 1 Samuel 8:4-7, 19-20, the Israelites were not content with God's way. They wanted a king to rule over them so they could be like other nations.
- B. Some now look around and say, "Look at what the denominations are doing." Brethren just have to be like them or perish. Unfortunately, they will perish!

- C. Churches can have reputations of greatness but are really dead because they have gone beyond the gospel of Christ (Revelation 3:1-3).

VII. ***"I Had Rather Do It Wrong Than Nothing At All"***

- A. In my estimation, this philosophy simply loses all touch with reality (2 Timothy 2:5). Would people be willing to follow this logic in any other endeavor in their life?
- B. How about we simply do God's work in God's way (1 Corinthians 15:58)? Let's abound "in the work of the Lord" instead of throwing caution to the wind.

Conclusion. All of these philosophies put more value on man's own thoughts and desires than on what God says (Proverbs 14:12). We cannot go beyond God no matter how "logical" it seems to man's mind!

The New Testament is our authority and we must have New Testament authority for every belief, teaching and practice, or give it up to be right with God. May we always have the same attitude as the psalmist (Psalm 119:124-128).