

Tolerance

The word, *Tolerance* is one of the most abused and misrepresented words in the English language today. In our society, if we are not tolerant of every deviant behavior, we are labeled as being “*hateful, right-wing wackos*” or “*close-minded*”. The secular world loves to throw Bible verses in the faces of Christians such as, “*Judge not, lest ye be judged*” (**Matt. 7:1**), without having a real grasp of what that means. This verse means that we are not to *condemn* anybody for their actions because we will be judged with the same measuring stick that we held others to (**Matt. 7:2**). Judging a person’s heart is **God’s** business – *not* ours.

However, the Scriptures call us to discern from what is right and wrong and to be intolerant of sin, but always being respectful of others (**Lev. 19:17, 2 Tim. 4:2, Gal. 6:1, James 5:20**). This harkens back to the old adage, “*Love the sinner but not the sin*”. Abortion, pornography, divorce, homosexual “marriage” and sexual promiscuity are among the many things in our society that we are not only expected to tolerate - but *celebrate*. Most of us are afraid to leave the room with the television on for fear of an immoral commercial or preview being viewed by our children. But, we cannot blame society as a whole without taking some of the blame ourselves.

We simply acquiesced and caved in to this onslaught of immorality and have allowed it to happen. Maybe part of the reason is that we were concerned with the way we would be looked upon by others for standing up for what is right. After all, we wouldn’t want to look too *religious* or *extreme* before our friends or co-workers.

We must stand firm in our Christian principles, being careful not to fall into the “tolerance trap”. In an effort to be overly-fair with others, we sometimes find ourselves at odds with those principles, siding instead with the culture at large. We are Christians *first and foremost* – before being citizens of any country or government. We belong to God – *not to the world* - and we were paid for by Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary. As Jesus told the Apostles, “**Render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s**” (**Matt. 22:21, Mark 12:17**). We must give an account before God for what we *did* - and did *not* do in this life.

The great Catholic philosopher, G. K. Chesterton once quipped, “*Tolerance is the virtue of a man without convictions.*” When we look at the permissive world in which we live, we suddenly realize how *right* he was . . .

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