

Things Morally Right, But Religiously Wrong

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. Religion and Morality --

1. Many people equate being moral with being religious or Christian. However, morality alone does not constitute the religion of Christ (e.g., Cornelius in Acts 10).
2. Furthermore, some think that if a thing is moral, it is necessarily something which may be incorporated into the worship of the church.
 - a. Some folks do not seem to understand why Christians do not practice certain things in a religious context.
 - b. They will look at a particular practice and not finding any thing wrong with it morally ask, "Well, why don't you use the ... why can't you do"
3. The reason is that some things may be morally right, but religiously wrong.

B. This Is a Bible Principle --

1. Nadab & Abihu
 - a. The narrative (Leviticus 10:1,2)
 - b. Nothing immoral about kindling a fire (Genesis 22:6).
 - c. However, God had said where this fire was to come from (Leviticus. 16:12).
 - d. These men offered to God something morally right, but religiously wrong.
2. Moses & the Rock
 - a. The narrative (Numbers 20:1-13)
 - b. Nothing immoral about striking the rock (Exodus 17:6)
 - c. Yet, God had said He wanted something different now (Numbers 20:8).
 - d. Moses offered to God something morally right, but religiously wrong.
3. David & the New Oxcart
 - a. The narrative (2 Sam. 6:1-11)
 - b. Nothing immoral about an oxcart (Numbers 7:1-9)
 - c. Yet, God had said that He wanted something different (Numbers 4:6-15).
 - d. David offered to God something morally right, but religiously wrong.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Hamburgers & Cokes Are Morally Right but Religiously Wrong—

1. There is nothing immoral about eating meat (Romans 14:1-23) or drinking soda pop (I Corinthians 6:12-13).
2. However, the Lord has authorized in the Lord's Supper unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (I Corinthians 11:23-27; Luke 22:13-20).
3. It is religiously wrong to use hamburgers & cokes or anything else except unleavened bread and fruit of the vine on the Lord's Table. Why?

B. X-mas Is Morally Right but Religiously Wrong—

1. There is nothing immoral about a day on which to have a big meal with friends and family and to exchange gifts with one another (Luke 5:29; Acts 20:35). Neither is

- there anything immoral about studying the birth of Jesus (I Timothy 3:16; Matthew 2:1ff; etc.).
2. However, the only day to which the Lord has attached any religious significance is the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
 3. It is religiously wrong to set aside another day and make it a religious obligation and attach to it religious traditions and myths. Why?

C. Anointing Oneself Is Morally Right but Religiously Wrong—

1. There is nothing immoral about using ointments or perfumes (Proverbs 27:9; Matthew 6:17).
2. However, the Lord has not authorized their use in the worship of the New Testament Church (cf. Mark 6:13; James 5:14).
3. It is religiously wrong to use anointing oil with a religious significance or impose such upon others for religious purposes? Why?

D. Instrumental Music Is Morally Right but Religiously Wrong—

1. There is nothing immoral about playing a mechanical instrument (I Samuel 16:23).
2. However, the Lord has not authorized their use in the worship of the New Testament Church (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 14:15; Hebrews 2:12).
3. It is religiously wrong to add instrumental music to the worship of God in singing praises. Why?

E. Christians Eating Together Is Morally Right but Religiously Wrong—

1. There is nothing immoral about Christians eating together (Acts 2:46).
2. However, the Lord has not authorized the elders of the local church to call the saints together to eat a common meal as a religious exercise. The only meal they are authorized to call the saints together for is the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:20ff).
3. Likewise, the church is certainly authorized to provide food for those of the faith that are hungry and in need (Acts 2:44; 4:35).
4. It is religiously wrong for the church as the church to organize and promote the eating of common meals. Why?

F. Youth Parties, Dominoes and Golf Are Morally Right but Religiously Wrong—

1. There is nothing immoral about wholesome recreation (Mark 6:31).
2. These types of activities are the responsibility of the home (Ephesians 6:1-4; I Corinthians 13:11). The church has not been charged with the entertainment of the youth. The church does have authority to teach young people the gospel (Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20).
3. It is religiously wrong for the church to organize and promote recreation for the members of the church.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. We Must Learn:

1. There is a biblical principle distinguishing between things moral and things religious.
2. Christians must be careful to observe the difference.

B. This Principle Is a Step Back toward Pure Christianity and the Worship of God in Spirit & Truth.