

Religion In The Sight Of Men

Men see what we do, and know how we act. How do we respond to this?

Do we make our religion completely public so that all will know all we do, or do we hide it so that no one knows what we do?

What does the scripture say about the practice of our religion in the sight of men?

I. We Can't Practice Religion To Gain Men's Favor **Matt. 6**

A. Showing Off

Give alms quietly.

Matt. 6:1-4 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

2 When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing

4 that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you."

Pray in private, not to be seen of men.

Matt. 6:5,6 "And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you."

Wash face when fasting – not for the appearance of men.

Matt. 6:16-18 "And whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance in order to be seen fasting by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face

18 so that you may not be seen fasting by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you."

The Pharisees practiced an outward religion to be seen of men.

Luke 20:46,47 "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets,

47 who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation."

Matt. 23:5-12 "But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the tassels of their garments.

6 And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

7 and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, Rabbi.

8 But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.

9 And do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

10 And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ.

11 But the greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted."

Isa. 29:13,14 "Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote,

14 Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the discernment of their discerning men shall be concealed."

Wrong motives condemn even great things to worthlessness.

1 Cor. 13:1-3 "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.”

B. Pleasing Men

Paul would no longer serve God if he sought to serve man.

Gal. 1:10 “For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.”

Paul would no longer serve God if he sought to serve man.

Some will craft their message to be pleasing to men.

2 Tim. 4:3,4 “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires;

4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.”

The false teachers have to flatter, the truth teachers does not.

Jude 1:16 “These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.”

C. Whom Do We Serve?

Are these any different than Christians, preachers or elders stopping to preaching the whole counsel of God to spare the feelings of friends, family, etc.

Any difference than church doing “Great Projects” so they can be like the “king for us to judge us like all the nations” **1 Sam. 8:5**

The social gospel is capitulation to the world in order to be more like the world and more pleasing to it.

It is to the Lord, and not the world that we are to be pleasing.

2 Cor. 5:9 “Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.”

Jn. 5:41 “I do not receive glory from men”

Jesus did not please men or get praise from them, his disciples should not expect to either.

II. But We Can't Hide From Men

A. We Can't Be Cowards

We must confess Christ before men to have a hope of heaven.

Matt. 10:32,33 “Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.

33 But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.”

We must make the “Good Confession” that Jesus is the Christ as Jesus did.

1 Tim. 6:13,14 “I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate,

14 that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ”

B. Some Cower In The Face Of Opposition

Jews were scared to speak of Jesus so that the Jewish leaders would no be upset.

Jn. 7:13 “Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.”

The parents of a man healed would not even admit that Jesus healed their own son for fear of the Jews.

Jn. 9:22,23 “His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed, that if anyone should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

23 For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

Jewish leaders would not admit Jesus was the Christ to keep other leaders happy.

Jn. 12:42,43 “Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;

43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.”

C. Examples Of Brave Saints

Joshua did not cower before a weak and adulterous generation.

Josh. 24:14,15 “Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

15 And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

Elijah did not cower before the 400 prophets of Baal, **1 Kings 18**.

Shadrach, Meshach, & Abed-nego would not bow down to the idol with everyone else, **Dan. 3**.

Others: Stephen, Paul, and Christ.

III. Be A Good Example In Practicing True Religion

A. A Light To Men

We are to be a light to the world and that cannot be hidden.

Matt. 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

15 Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house.

16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Our example should help to convert some.

1 Pet. 2:12 “Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

Elders are to be examples to the flock.

1 Pet. 5:3 “nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”

Paul was an example of how to act.

Acts 20:31-35 “Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

33 I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or clothes.

34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me.

35 In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

B. People Will Notice What You Do No Matter What

Timothy was to do several things; one was not to do anything that would cause him to be looked down on.

1 Tim. 4:11-16 “Prescribe and teach these things.

12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

13 Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.

14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

15 Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all.

16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.”

We are to have proper conduct so that nothing bad can be said against us

Tit. 2:6-8 “Likewise urge the young men to be sensible;

7 in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified,

8 sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.”

Paul’s circumstance and work was known all over the Capital city.

Phil 1:12-14 “Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,
13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,
14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.”

C. People Will Notice What Congregations Do

Paul knew about their situation even though he was not the one who taught them and may not have ever been to Colossae.

Phil. 1:4-8 “always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.
8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.”

The Roman church was known all over the world.

Rom. 1:8 “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.”

The Thessalonians were an example to all Macedonia and Achaia.

1 Thess. 1:6-10 “You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,
7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.
8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.
9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,
10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

D. A Few Things Will Be Hidden In this Life, But None In The Next

Very few things can be successfully hidden, but God knows and will judge.

Luke 12:2 “But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.”

God will judge all things, even thoughts and intentions

Heb. 4:12,13 “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

Invitation:

We are to neither hide our faith nor flaunt it.

We do some things in private, but mostly we practice our religion in our daily life and most people will know if we practice what we preach.