

# LIBERALISM-WHAT IS IT?

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The word *liberal* is a generic term which may refer to good as well as evil. One should be liberal in his financial contribution to the Lord (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:2,7). On the other hand, liberalism in doctrine and practice is to loose people from what God in his word has bound upon them (2 John 9—ASV). Said doctrines, if believed and practiced, will send one to hell. Liberals are people who, in belief and practice, will not be limited by the truth of the New Testament (Jam. 1:25). They want greater liberty than what God's word allows.

It is amazing that brethren can have liberals (in belief and practice) in their midst for years and not recognize them for what they are. Why is this? Some of the reasons are: 1) general ignorance of the contents of the Bible (Hos. 4:6); 2) no respect for Bible authority (Col. 3:17); 3) ignorance of how to ascertain Bible authority (2 Tim. 2:15); 4) not convicted by the biblical truth known (Heb. 4:2,6); 5) convicted by the truth, but without the courage of one's convictions (cowards) (John 12:42); and 6) false concepts of longsuffering, patience, forbearance, meekness, gentleness, kindness, mercy, and love (Rom. 11:22). Which one of these biblical concepts listed in point six allows for the belief, practice, and propagation of error? Which one implies that sin should not be exposed and rebuked?

It should be clearly understood that truth never implies error, nor does error ever imply truth. So, a doctrine or view that implies error is itself erroneous. If one's concept of longsuffering implies perpetually tolerating the erroneous conduct of brethren, he has the wrong concept of longsuffering. If one thinks love of the sinner, in or out of the church, does not permit correcting the fault in his life, he has a false concept of love. People who showed their love for the gospel were treated differently from those who manifested their rebelliousness to God and his word. One would think a mere cursory reading of the Bible would establish this point.

Please consider the true/false statements below. Such statements will help us see the erroneous definition some give to the terms used above in point six as well as the fallacious reasoning regarding those terms.

- T F The Bible teaches that being loving, longsuffering, patient, meek, gentle, kind and merciful with a person, whether in the church or out of it, forbids reproving the person's sins with whom one is loving, longsuffering, etc.
- T F Paul was mean-spirited toward the Corinthian brethren when he asked: "What will ye? shall I conic unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness" (1 Cor. 4:2 1).
- T F Paul manifested a loving spirit when he told the Philippian brethren: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" (Phi. 1:9).
- T F Paul hated the Corinthians and loved the Philippians.
- T F Paul loved both the Corinthians and the Philippians because he told them what their spiritual condition determined they should be told.

**Before answering the following questions, read Acts 13:4-12**

- T F Paul loved Sergius Paulus, but hated Barjesus (Elymas).
- T F Paul should have said to Sergius Paulus what he said to Barjesus.
- T F The Holy Spirit had Paul use harsh and unkind words when he addressed Barjesus.
- T F The words of the Holy Spirit through Paul to Barjesus prove that neither Paul nor the Holy Spirit loved Barjesus.
- T F There was a difference in the attitude of Sergius Paulus and Barjesus, but Paul dealt with both of them in a Christian spirit.
- T F When a person, in or out of the church, loves the sins he commits and refuses to be corrected by words of truth, any words used to condemn his sins are, in his sight, harsh and unkind.
- T F One loves his brother when he refuses to tell him the truth of the gospel he needs to hear in order for him to turn from his sins.
- T F Unkind and harsh words are words that a person does not deserve to have said to him.
- T F An example of words a person does not deserve to have said to him are the words Paul said to Ananias the high priest, "*God shall smite thee, thou whited wall*" (Acts 23:1-5).
- T F The following words of Stephen to his audience are words his audience did not deserve to hear: "*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye*" (Acts 7:51).
- T F Paul told Timothy that "*the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will*" (2 Tim. 2:24-26).
- T F When Paul withstood Peter to the face because of Peter's sin, he was practicing the principles he had given Timothy concerning how to correct brethren in error (Gal. 2:11ff).

*The liberal mind will always allow for itself what it will not allow in others.* It will argue with you that is wrong to argue; it will practice on you what it seeks to condemn in you; it will become angry at you because it ascribes anger to you; it is critical of criticism; it gossips to oppose gossiping; it pronounces judgment on those it deems guilty of judging; it sows discord among brethren under the guise of building unity; and it declares: "If I cannot rule, I will ruin." Its evil, black, sinful work is accomplished under the cloak of darkness in back rooms, back alleys, over telephones and through email.

It is the coward's way; the way of the self-willed and selfish. It will never meet on the public polemic platform of honest, forthright debate. It is the tool of liars and hypocrites, sired by the father of such, Satan himself. It is a mind full of vindictiveness and hate. It constantly seeks its own to the hurt of those it professes to love. It is a mind that to

one's face is all smiles and with a warm handshake wishes you the best, but behind your back plots your overthrow by any means possible.

Peter and Jude in no uncertain terms described such foul characters (2 Pet. 2; Jude). Paul declares how they must be dealt with, and we are no better than they if we refuse to obey God in how to deal with them (Rom. 16:17-18). Of such, John, the apostle of love wrote: *"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us"* (1 John 2:19). He who wrote the great chapter on love declared that love *"rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth"* (1 Cor. 13:6).~