

Brethren With Too Many Relatives

2 Timothy 3:13-17

Introduction:

- A. "Brethren with too many relatives"
 - 1. Am not speaking of long lost relatives.
 - 2. Am talking about *relatives*¹ as opposed to *absolutes*².
- B. Brethren often equate viewing any truth as absolute with ignorance.
 - 1. Things settled in heaven (cf. Psa. 119:89) becoming fewer and fewer.
 - a. Not because have found scriptural evidence to contrary.
 - b. But because positions do not seem to "work" in present age.
 - 2. Backwoodsman's description of son's education.³
 - 3. Brethren sometimes measure spiritual growth by degree of uncertainty.
- C. Brethren often make truth relative to time, place and circumstance.
 - 1. Panelist's description of modesty.⁴
 - 2. Modesty in Grandma's day vs. today.
 - 3. First Century Revelation reinterpreted to fit 20th century man.

Discussion:

I. The Truth Of The Gospel Is Absolute Truth.

- A. Given by inspiration of the Absolute One. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:16-21).
- B. Given to make us sure of more things, not less.
 - 1. Timothy could be positive about his teaching. (2 Tim. 3:14-17; 1 Tim. 1:3).
 - 2. Luke wrote of things **most surely believed** and of **infallible** proofs. (Luke 1:1; Acts 1:3).
 - 3. Paul did not think truth changed with places and circumstances.
 - a. Rebuked Peter's behavior among gentiles. (Gal. 2:14ff.)
 - b. Truth was same everywhere. (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17).

II. The Truth Of The Gospel Is Hindered By Brethren With Too Many Relatives.

- A. When they make no effort to apply truth stated in "relative terms".
 - 1. "Long hair" - "How long is long"?
 - 2. "Modest Apparel" - "When does a garment become immodest?"
 - 3. Same problem with other relative terms, yet recognize violations.
 - a. "Long-suffering"
 - b. "Soon Angry"
 - c. "Little" or "much" wine.
 - d. "Apt to teach"
- B. When they change convictions relative to time, place, and circumstances.
 - 1. Because run into difficult "what if's" of application. (J.T. Lewis⁵)
 - a. Necessity of baptism.
 - b. Necessity of confessing sins.
 - c. Drawing lines of fellowship.
 - d. "Saints Only"
 - 2. Because run into unpleasant and/or unacceptable consequences of application.
 - a. Loved ones left out by applying Bible teaching on:
 - (1) Baptism.
 - (2) One Church.
 - (3) Marriage and Divorce
 - (4) Fellowship.
 - (5) Worldliness.
 - b. Numerical growth hindered by application.

Conclusion:

- A. Let us not be so dogmatic that we cannot be swayed by scriptural evidence, but into trap of leaving nearly everything open-ended.
- B. Let us not be so rigid that will not review and/or revise views in light of Scriptures, be sure readjustments not related to individual, time, or circumstances.

1. **Relativism:** The theory of knowledge and ethics that holds that criteria of judgment are relative, varying with the individual, time, and circumstances. (Random House American Dictionary.)

2. Absolutism: “2. the quality of being absolute, or certain; positivism. 3. in philosophy, any doctrine involving the existence of an absolute. (Websters New World Dictionary of the American Language.)

3.”He is learning more and more about less and less. By the time he gets through college, he is going to know everything about nothing.”

4.”Bare breasted woman in Africa not immodest.” (**F.Y.T.**).

5.”The Bible was not designed to answer every fool question some people might think up”.