

One of the Most Offensive Aspects in Any Believers' Relationship With God

"To the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: 'The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says these things: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot'" (Rev. 3:14-15).

Laodicea means, "judged" or "judging by the people." The implication is that in this church, men's opinions are exalted above God's, resulting in a people lukewarm to Him. There is nothing more offensive in any relationship than indifference. This church is so offensive to the Lord that they make Him sick, and He will vomit them out of His mouth. Yet the greatest promises given to any church age are given to the overcomers in this age.

We have plenty in the biblical prophecies to warn us that this is no time to be lukewarm about God. If we are awake, the pursuit of God will be the daily drive of our life. When men's opinions are exalted above the Lord's, we take on an un-sanctified sympathy for the ways of men and begin to fear their opinions more than God's opinions. In our time, this is called "political correctness." Such a mindset will lead to a terrible fall, as the Lord warned Peter in Matthew 16:23: "But He turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me Satan! You are an offense to Me; for you are not mindful of the things that are of God, but those that are of men.'"

We will become a stumbling block to the purposes of God if we become too sympathetic with the interests of men. This is why Paul wrote in Galatians 1:10c: "For if I were still trying to please men, I would not be the servant of Christ." Nothing can

cause us to compromise our service to the Lord as much as the fear of man, or the tendency to strive to please men.

Jesus warned the Pharisees about this in Luke 16:15: "He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For that which is highly esteemed before men is an abomination before God." If we do what is pleasing to men, we will do what is detestable in God's sight. The reverse is also true. If we do what is pleasing in God's sight, we will often do what is detestable to men. We have a choice: either God or men will detest what we are doing. Which do we prefer?

Jesus again warned in Luke 6:26: "Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for so their fathers spoke of the false prophets." This is the category we will fall into if we are driven by the fear of men, seeking their approval over God's and speaking what is contrary to the actual message of God, making us false prophets.

The challenge is taken to a new level in James 4:4: "You adulterers and adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." We are called to love the world, not be friends with it. Friends have common interests and pursuits. Our very lives are called to be a prophetic challenge to the world's ways. If we take on the ways of the world, we become enemies of God.

Jesus gave another important rebuke to those who would live in the fear of men: "How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" (John 5:44) The Greek word translated "glory" here could have been translated "recognition." So, seeking glory, or recognition, from men will destroy our faith. This is likely the main reason why there is so little faith and power in the church today.

This is the church age when most will fall to this deplorable condition. Yet there is a hope and a promise given to those who overcome the spirit of this age that is greater than the promises given to any other church. {eoa}

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