

R.T. Kendall: God Uses the Yuck Factor to Promote His Glory

God offends the mind to reveal the heart. I have a hypothesis—that God loves to come up with things that will offend the sophisticated. That might include me.

So my hypothesis is this—I call it the “yuck” factor: I reckon that God looks high and low over the earth to come up with what will make sophisticated people say, “Yuck.” He does this to see if they will be willing to be humbled by what the world regards as offensive. In Britain particularly, “yuck” is a word to express disgust or repugnance. If people say yuck when they see something that appears to make no sense or looks silly, outrageous or disgusting, God says, “That will do nicely.” He continues to choose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise (1 Cor. 1:27). His “ways” are higher than our ways (Isa. 55:9). What God often wants to do makes absolutely no sense at the time—whether His requiring Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22), His commanding King Saul to kill all the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:3), or Jesus’ choosing tax collectors to be His disciples (Matt. 9:9-12). We may or may not like this, but a part of God’s “ways” is to do things that make no sense at all—at first.

God uses the yuck factor to promote His glory. He uses it often for lukewarm Christians. Jesus said of the church of Laodicea that they were neither hot or cold but lukewarm. He wishes either be one or the other. Lukewarm Christians are the hardest to reach and hardest to teach. One way to teach them is to offend the mind to reveal the heart. Jesus promises that He will spit them out of His mouth (Rev. 3:16). Lukewarm Christians make Him sick. One of the characteristics of lukewarm Christians is that they are smug, and God hates

smugness. They are self-satisfied, and they have excessive pride in their achievements. They are pleased with themselves and take themselves very seriously. They would pass a lie-detector test in believing they are absolutely in good shape spiritually before God. They see themselves as having need of nothing. The opposite is true, says Jesus. They are “wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked” (Rev. 3:17b).

God sometimes uses people or manifestations that make us quickly say, “That cannot be God.” The “experts” would say the Welsh Revival would not be of God because there was virtually no preaching and all spontaneous singing. John Wesley was offended with George Whitefield leaving the pulpit and going to the fields to preach to ordinary people. And when the hearers of Whitefield jerked or barked like dogs as he preached, that—to Wesley—was not God. But eventually Wesley followed Whitefield to the fields and saw the same manifestations.

“They did not know My ways,” God said of ancient Israel (Heb. 3:10). Those of us who see God’s “ways” only in terms of His sovereignty, transcendence, majesty and glory are often the first to be critical of manifestations that seem to be utterly disgraceful—laughing, shouting, jumping, running and rolling on the floor. There is a reason some were called “holy rollers”; people literally *rolled* on the floor, carpet or ground. Yes, it is indeed one of God’s ways to bring people to reverence, submission and fear. And amusingly enough, I have had people say, “Yuck” over my teaching of the sovereignty of God! But it is also one of God’s ways to challenge our dignity through strange manifestations. I can tell you, God has humbled me.

I have managed to endure the criticisms of those sincere—and sometimes godly—people who doubt my wisdom when it comes to endorsing strange manifestations. I ask myself one question: What would I do if I knew that I would stand before Jesus at the judgment seat in the next 24 hours? That makes the

challenge dissolve to nothing. When I know in my heart I am not afraid to face Him, I know I am on safe ground in endorsing the weird manifestations that are going to come with every authentic move of the Spirit. But I would certainly hate to stand before Him if I had capitulated to the fear of people. What is more, the fear of man is a snare (Prov. 29:25). Not all who oppose weird manifestations are afraid of people, but some of them are. I refuse to be among them.

We live in a generation in which people want to destigmatize the gospel. They would rob it of its glory—denying that the God-man satisfied God’s justice by His most precious blood. There are also those who would destigmatize the Holy Spirit—only affirming what keeps them in their comfort zone.

I close this with a reminder that one of God’s ways is to do things that are initially misunderstood and make no sense at first. The greatest example of this? Good Friday. Who would have thought at that time and on that day that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (2 Cor. 5:19)? But God Himself was at work. The way God chose to save us was the best kept secret in human history—until the early church made it known.

This should give each of us pause. We must lower our voices and wait

and see whether God is actually the instigator of the very things that offend us. Until we know for sure that God is *not* in certain manifestations and movements, let us be wary of fighting against them lest we fight against God!

✘ Adapted from *The Presence of God* by R. T. Kendall, copyright 2017, published by Charisma House. Through this book, you will learn how to develop a sensitivity to God’s presence so your love for Him and relationship with Him will deepen and grow. To order your copy, click on this link.

Prayer Power for the Week of Feb. 11, 2018

This week, open yourself to the presence of God so He can lead you into authenticity. Ask Him to expand your vision and remove preconceived notions about Him, His ways and His manifestations. Continue to pray for worldwide revival, beginning with our own churches and nation. Lift up our leaders and ask that they would receive and be open to godly counsel. Remember our allies and all those working to ensure peace in the world. Read: Isaiah 55:8-9; 1 Corinthians 1:27-29