

RADICAL RESPECT FOR GOD

Introduction

- A. Text: **1 Pt. 1:13-17**.
- B. Few of us think of ourselves as being outright irreverent — but true reverence includes respect, and there are often ways in which our respect for God leaves something to be desired.
 - 1. Rather than taking God with the utmost seriousness, the temptation is to trifle with Him and His will — we wish to serve God on our terms.
 - 2. Is our commitment anything like the person who described himself as “deeply superficial”?
- C. The word “lackadaisical” often describes our attitude. Cf. **Rev. 3:15-17**.
- D. We sometimes fail to act in such a way as to inculcate deep respect for God in the minds of others: “Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them’” (**Num. 20:12**).
- E. But we ought, instead, to have a radical respect for God.
 - 1. Radical = “arising from or going to a root or source; basic” (AHD).
 - 2. God ought to be the most serious concern of our entire life.
- F. There are some things we cannot do and have the right respect for God.

I. WE CANNOT BE INDIFFERENT TO GOD

- A. In a “secular” society most people will feel that religion simply does not matter — the average person will not take God into account as an active, practical concern.
 - 1. Even as Christians, we sometimes catch ourselves acting as if other things were relatively more important to us than God.
 - 2. We seem to believe that God can safely be relegated to the periphery of our concern.
- B. But, in truth, God is a “consuming fire” (**Hb. 12:29**).
 - 1. God’s appearance to Israel upon Mount Sinai was truly awe-inspiring - **Exo. 19:16-19; 20:18,19**.
 - 2. We have come to “Mount Zion.” Cf. **Hb. 12:18-29**.
- C. We need to “take heed how [we] hear” (**Lk. 8:18**). Cf. **Isa. 66:2; Hb. 2:1-4**.

II. WE CANNOT ACCOMMODATE GOD TO OURSELVES

- A. We may try to adjust or fit God to ourselves — to “domesticate” God, or “cut Him down to size.”
- B. If we find God and His will intrusive on our “lifestyle” or an embarrassment before our friends, we may try to moderate them and make them convenient, respectable. Cf. **Mk. 8:34-38**.
- C. But instead, we ought to let God be God, and let ourselves be His creatures.
 - 1. “Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened” (**Rom. 1:21**).

2. "Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever" (**Rom. 1:25**).

D. If any accommodation needs to be made, let it be our accommodation to God!

III. WE CANNOT CONFINE GOD TO ONE COMPARTMENT OF LIFE

A. By its nature, the commitment we make to God is all-encompassing.

1. We cannot know what the full ramifications of our faith will turn out to be or how much sacrifice the Lord's service will end up requiring.
2. We sign a blank contract with God when we obey the gospel.

B. When we begin to see what full obedience is going to mean, we may try to confine God to one compartment of life (the "religious") and keep the others to ourselves (the "secular").

C. But we cannot put the living God in any box of our own making.

1. "And this they did, not as we had hoped, but first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God" (**2 Cor. 8:5**).
2. "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (**Col. 3:17**).

D. There is no area of life where God's will is irrelevant.

IV. WE CANNOT MOCK GOD

A. Mock = "to treat with ridicule or contempt; deride" (AHD).

B. Children — if they know "Now don't do that" is an empty threat — will often do as they please with a contemptuous mockery toward their parents.

C. We can ill afford to take this disrespectful approach with God - **Gal. 6:7,8**.

1. "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (**Psa. 14:1**). Cf. **10:4,6,13**.
2. "An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked: there is no fear of God before his eyes" (**Psa. 36:1**).

D. We may actually treat God with less respect than we would another human being - **Mal. 1:6-8**. Cf. **Isa. 1:10-15**.

E. But God will not be insulted or trifled with: "One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination" (**Prov. 28:9**).

Conclusion

A. Jesus sifted those who only wanted a superficial attachment to Him from those who wanted a serious involvement. Cf. **Lk. 9:57-62**.

B. To be near God with our words, but far from Him in our hearts is to be in a dire condition: "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me" (**Mt. 15:8**). Cf. **Isa. 29:13**.

C. It takes an utterly serious, diligent approach to the matter to go to heaven.

1. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (**2 Tim. 2:15**).
 2. "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (**1 Pt. 1:13**; cf. **vv.14-17**). Cf. **1 Pt. 3:15**.
 3. As the kids say, we need to "get real."
 4. We need to "get basic" with God.
- D. If God's will matters at all, it is all that matters.
- E. Ultimately, the person will not be able to respect himself who does not truly respect God.
- F. May we:
1. Think about God more seriously.
 2. Obey His commands more completely.
 3. Be more totally involved in His work.
 4. Give ourselves more sacrificially to Him.
- G. May we radically respect God!