

CAN YOU RECOMMEND YOUR RELIGION?

INTRODUCTION

Before you can convince others of the right path to Heaven, you must convince them of what your religion has done for you, your family, your business.

- A. We must have a healthy regard for the Scriptures.
 - 1. I Peter 3:15: But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."
 - 2. I Thess. 5:21: "Test all things; hold fast what is good."
 - 3. II Tim. 2:15: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

I. CAN WE RECOMMEND OUR RELIGION BY THE WAY WE LIVE?

- A. Phil. 1:27: "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or are absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
- B. Matt. 7:16-20: "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles. Even so every good tree bears good fruit but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruit, you will know them."
 - 1. What kind of fruit are we bearing in our daily lives?
 - (a) The world can look at us and see.
- C. Phil. 4:8-9: "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things...The things which you have learned and received and heard and seen in me - these do, and the God of peace be with you."

II. CAN YOU RECOMMEND YOUR RELIGION BY THE WAY YOU SUPPORT IT?

- A. Acts 9:36: "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did."
- B. Col. 1:10: "That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."
- C. Titus 3:1,8: "Remind them to be subject to rulers, and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work ...This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men."

III. CAN YOU RECOMMEND SUPPORTING YOUR RELIGION BECAUSE OF WHAT IT DOES FOR YOU?

- A. Psalm 37:25: "I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."
 - B. Heb. 13:5-6: "Let your conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So that we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what shall man do to me.'"
 - C. Rom. 8:37-39: "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created things, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus."
 - D. Matt. 6:31-34: "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat? or What shall we wear.' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 'But seek you first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.'"
1. Are we willing to take these promises of God at face value. That kind of faith will convince the world.

IV. CAN YOU RECOMMEND YOUR RELIGION BY YOUR TENACITY OF PURPOSE?

- A. "Tenacity of purpose is defined as the state of quality of being able or inclined to hold fast to a purpose or aim. 'Stick-to-it-iveness' or tenacity of purpose, is quality which enables us to finish every task begun."
 - B. Luke 9:62: Jesus speaking, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."
 - C. James 1:2-4: "Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfast have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."
 - D. I. Cor. 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."
 - E. Acts 21:13: "Then Paul answered, What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."
1. We must have the tenacity of Paul, that singleness of purpose - that determination to pay any cost to be found faithful in our faith.
 - (a) That kind of example will convince the world of what your religion has done for you.

V. CAN YOU RECOMMEND YOUR RELIGION BY YOUR PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES?

A. Self-Control:

1. I Cor. 7:27: "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage (subjection), lest by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected."

2. Rudyard Kipling wrote, "If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming you .. you'll be a man, my son."
 3. James 1:26: "If anyone thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this man's religion is vain."
 4. Titus 2:6: "Likewise urge the younger men to control themselves."
 5. Titus 1:7-8: "A bishop must be self-controlled."
- B. How about your tact?
1. Col. 4:5-6: "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer every one."
 2. I Cor. 15: "Love is not boastful ... arrogant or rude."
 3. I Thess. 2:7: "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children."
 4. Eph. 4:32: "Be kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
- C. How about your faithfulness:
1. The apostle Paul in speaking of Timothy could say:
Phil. 2:20-21: "I have no one like him, who will be genuinely anxious for your welfare. They all look after their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ."
 2. I Cor. 9:24: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it."
 3. Phil. 1:6: "I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."
 4. Rev. 2:2-4: To the church at Ephesus:
"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou can not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and has found them liars; and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and has not fainted. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou has left thy first love."

VI. CAN YOU RECOMMEND YOUR RELIGION BY BEING VERY RESPONSIBLE?

- A. Paul points out how responsible Greek Christians were:
- Rom. 15:26-27: "For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contributions for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem; they were pleased to do it, and indeed they are in debt to them, for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought to be of service to them in material blessings."

Henry Ward Beecher captures the idea of responsibility:

"All higher motives, ideals, conceptions, sentiments in a man are of no account if they do not come forward to strengthen him for better discharge of the duties which devolve upon him in the ordinary affairs of life."

B. I Tim. 5:8: "If any man provide for his relatives, especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

C. Isaiah 6:8: "Here am I, Lord, send me."

Note: This is the attitude we must have. Suppose Moses had said, Here am I, Lord, send Aaron."

All must say, SEND ME, SEND ME NOW AND SEND ME TOMORROW.

D. The kind of Christians we need in the fields is well summed up by Gifford Pinchot:

"There is no more valuable subordinate than the man to whom you can give a piece of work and then forget it, in the confident expectation that the next time it is brought to your attention it will come in the form of a report that the thing has been done."

"I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day,
I'd rather one would walk with me than merely show the way.

The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear,
For counsel is confusing, but examples always clear.

For to see the good in action is what everybody needs,
I can soon learn how to do it if you'll let me see it done.

I can watch your hand in action, but your tongue too fast will
run.

CONCLUSION: We must recommend our religion by:

1. Our faith in action.
2. By our sincere caring for others.
3. By personal uprightness in our own lives.
4. By a willingness to faithfulness in saving the lost.
5. By having getting to Heaven as a center reference point around which to build all of our lives.