

### Introduction:

Over the past few years, we have heard all kinds of complaining about the name of God. We hear about them trying to take God out of the schools, out of the courthouses, off our money and out of the pledge. Many people, including Christians, have been up in arms about all these issues. Some Christians suggest we need to be campaigning to make sure these issues are resolved in God's favor. However, I have noticed something in my Bible. God never once talked about any of these issues. The Scripture never once mandates prayer be in schools, the 10 commandments be displayed in courtrooms, our money display trust in God or our national pledge mention His name. Don't misunderstand. I like these things. I think they are good. I'd like to live in a country that upholds them all. But I begin to wonder if Satan isn't distracting us from the real fights we need to have by these fake fights that promote symbolism over substance. What good are we accomplishing if we force the schools to allow prayers, but never teach anyone to pray? If we get the 10 Commandments displayed in courtrooms, but never convince anyone to live by God's will? If we keep the words "In God We Trust" on our money, but never convince anyone not to trust in money? If we keep "One nation under God" in the pledge, but never help anyone submit to God? We feel good when we rant and rave about the political issues. We feel like we are doing something for the Lord. But we are not. These issues are symbolism over substance. God has not asked for these things, rather He has asked that we confess Him in our lives. Specifically, we see this in relation to Jesus in **Matthew 10:32-33**. Jesus said we must confess Him before men. We need to understand God is not concerned with whether teachers are allowed to lead students in prayer, but whether or not we pray. He is not concerned with where the 10 Commandments are displayed, but with whether or not we follow His will. He is not concerned with what is written on our money, but what is written on our hearts. He is not concerned with how we word our pledge to our country, but with how we demonstrate our allegiance to Him. We must learn to confess Jesus, we must learn to confess God and we must learn to do it in ways that really matter. No it won't be as glamorous as attacking our congress for some of its laws, but it will be what God wants.

### Discussion:

- I. Confession in word.
  - A. Confession is, in general, an action of speech. The word for "confess" is *homologeō*, which literally means same word. At its root, then, confession in a spiritual matter means to say the same thing about something God says about it. Confessing God, means to say the same thing about God that He says about Himself. Confessing God means to say about Him all the things we have learned throughout our Focus about Him.
  - B. We confess God by praising Him. **Psalm 29:1-2** says we should ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name. He deserves praise. When we take time to think of who and what He is and verbally declare His greatness, as illustrated in **Revelation 4:8-11**, we are saying about Him what He says about Himself.
  - C. We confess God by teaching about Him. In **I Corinthians 15:34**, Paul rebuked the Corinthians because some people had no knowledge of God. We are supposed to tell others about God. Paul set an example on Mars Hill in **Acts 17:23** proclaiming to the people their "unknown God." In **II Corinthians 5:11**, Paul said he knew the fear of the Lord and therefore tried to persuade them about God. If we are going to confess Jesus, confess God, it is not enough to make sure the pledge or our money contains His name, we actually have to teach about this God they proclaim we are under and trust.
  - D. We confess God by our daily conversation. How often is God part of our conversation? This is different from specific attempts to teach about God. This is letting God and God's things be part of our common conversations with others. When folks compliment us, do we tell them about God's grace? When folks ask what is going on in our lives, do we mention God's involvement?

When good things happen, do we acknowledge God before others by praising Him? Or do we try to leave out mentioning spiritual things because we are afraid it might offend others or anger them or that they will think we are odd? We don't ever see any examples of mere conversations in the New Testament. However, I believe **Acts 16:25** is an example of this principle. Paul and Silas were not purposefully and specifically trying to teach anyone. Rather, praise was just part of their lives and so they praised God in front of other people.

- E. If we are going to confess God, we must make sure not to use His name vainly or lightly. One of God's Ten Commandments for the Israelites was not to take the name of God in vain (**Exodus 20:7**). This same principle applies to us. When we speak of God it must be with reverence. God's name was not meant to be an expletive of shock, fright or wonder. If we are going to say the words "Oh my God," it had better be because we are calling out to our God with honor.

## II. Confession in deed.

- A. While confession is primarily an issue of speech, there is a figurative sense in which we confess God with our actions as well. **Matthew 5:16** encourages us to let our lights shine so the people around us will see God and glorify Him. By our actions we declare whether or not we believe what God says about Himself. If we disobey God, then no matter what our mouths says, our actions say we do not believe or trust Him. However, when we submit to His will, our actions declare His greatness.
- B. **Colossians 3:17** says everything we do in word and deed must be done in the name of Jesus. Thus, in a sense, everything we do is supposed to be a proclamation of Jesus' name. In every walk of life, we must allow the principles of God's will to govern our lives and by so doing we glorify and honor Him. **I Corinthians 10:31** says everything we do should be done to glorify God, even down to how we eat and drink.
- C. Consider one specific example of confessing God to the world through actions. **I Timothy 4:3-5** says God made food to be received with thanksgiving and it is sanctified through prayer. When we are in the public eye, do we still offer thanks to God for our food? When we are at a restaurant do we confess to the world that God is the provider of our needs by praying? Or do we keep that under wraps when we are out with others or in front of others? Do you see how our actions can confess God as much as our words?

## III. Confession in truth.

- A. Having said the above about confessing God in word and deed, I believe it is important to note **Isaiah 48:1**. God rebuked the Israelites because they confessed Him, "but not in truth or right" (ESV). They confessed God in word, they even went through some of the motions of God's will, but they did not do so sincerely or properly. As Jesus quoted Isaiah in **Matthew 15:8**, these were people who honored God with their lips but their hearts were far from Him.
- B. If we are confessing God in word and deed, we must not play the hypocrite. Confessing God in the assembly of the saints does us no good if we are not confessing God throughout our lives. As **Titus 2:11-14** explains, Christianity is about how we live every day, not just how we "go to church" on Sunday.
- C. Additionally, confessing God in truth means we are confessing God for His glory, not our own. **Matthew 5:16** said we should let our lights shine so others might see Him through us and glorify Him. **Matthew 6:1** warns against letting our light shine so others will see how spiritual we are. We have to be very careful here. I have been around people that liked to pray in front of people and constantly said, "Praise the Lord" and "I'm blessed," and the feeling they left in their wake was not one of praising God but displaying their own spirituality. Thus, we must walk a fine line. We must make sure our light shines so others can see God, not so they can see us.

## Conclusion:

If you want to debate about the words on our money or vote about the Pledge of Allegiance, that is fine. But always remember, God is not nearly so concerned with what is on our money as He is with what is on our hearts. He is not nearly so concerned that we campaign for Christian legislation as He is that we display Christian lives. Voting about prayer in schools is easy. Confessing God in word, deed and truth is not. God wants the personal confession from our lives because He deserves it.