

Ambassador III - Character

An Ambassador Does Not Bring Reproach (part 2)

Introduction/Review

Over the last few weeks we discussed how an Ambassador knows the fear of the LORD (Cor. 5). The first week we talked about the fear of the LORD as:

- Foundational (beginning of wisdom/knowledge)
- Experienced by all who encounter Him (friends and enemies alike!)
- Paradoxical for Christians--
 - base fear due to His Holiness (and our lack of it)
 - fear of what would have been--prompting proportionate love and gratitude
 - a resulting love-motivated fear of not pleasing Him (“it is our aim” - v.9)

Then we turned our attention to Living it Out

Knowing the Fear of the LORD, an ambassador:

- **would not dare to tamper with His message – the Gospel**

The second week we discussed how an ambassador, knowing the fear of the Lord, dares not tamper with the message of reconciliation that has been entrusted to him/her. Then we discussed some of the reasons why an ambassador might tamper with God’s message:

- pride -- “we can do better”
 - ignorance -- “just don’t know any better” (apathy?)
 - fear of man -- “what will people think?” (future lesson on this)
- **would not dare to misrepresent His Character or otherwise bring reproach upon Christ or His Bride by living immorally or foolishly. (ref. Piper Handout)**

Last week we started this discussion, leaving the last “Fear of the Lord” topic for next time:

- **is growing in boldness and courage, putting to death the fear of man.**

... would not dare to misrepresent God’s character or bring reproach upon Christ or is Bride by living immorally or foolishly.

Last week’s white board exercise: What are some of the ways that people wearing the label “Christian” bring reproach upon God, Christ, the Church and the Gospel? Then we started the discussion of these three areas.

- I. About God --*explicitly teaching wrong things about God (ref. wk-1) or implicitly teaching wrong things about God by the way we live (ref. following points)*
- II. Immorality --*didn’t spend a lot of time on it, but important. Flee immorality! Warning: "Human beings have an infinite capacity for self-deception." --Chuck Colson*
- III. Foolishness --*here is where we’ll focus primarily today.*

White board exercise (two part)

Let's focus on the "live foolishly" column from last week. What are some things we do, ways we behave that make us **appear** foolish? *What's an ambassador's response in each case?*

- I. Those things that aren't foolish, but **appear** so to the world.
 - *Leave a promising career for the ministry? [could this actually be foolish?]*
- II. Those things that **are** foolish.
 - *How do we discern the difference?*

Would you agree that life is a continual process of decision-making? (*You got up this morning...*) How ought Christians to do it? What's important? [God's will]

Would you all agree that God's will is critically important for Christians (ambassadors)?

- *How do we discern God's will? [transition out... which category do these fit into?]*

What we've been talking about here is discussed in greater detail in the first part of the Amb-II -*Wisdom* class. So as we go through this review of that material, be thinking of how our decision making model has the potential to bring reproach on God, Christ, and his Body/Bride the Church.

Make your initial notes as we go through it. We'll have breakout time and Q&A to discuss it further. **Caution:** *You may find some cherished beliefs/practices being challenged!*

I. Review of the "Decision Making and the Will of God" portion of Amb-II

A. "Conventional" decision-making view in a nutshell:

1. *God has an individual will or blueprint for our lives that we are to be about figuring out.*
2. *We use a variety of methods to figure out what that will is.* Some of the methods:
 - a. looking for private messages in the Bible
 - b. trying to "tune in" to the leading of the Holy Spirit through our thoughts and feelings – two-way prayer techniques, etc.
 - c. depending on our feeling of "having a peace about it"
 - d. looking for and depending upon "opened and closed doors"
 - e. putting out unbiblical fleeces
 - f. looking for "confirmations" in various forms

- B. We discussed these popular techniques and demonstrated how none of them were given to us as models for our decision making, how the proof texts offered for the texts do not support them, and some of the dangers of the methods.
- C. Discussed trying to “hear the voice of God,” and whether we are attempting to limit God by refusing to pursue unbiblical means to divine God’s will (and refusing to believe that God could be “trying” to communicate with us but failing).
- D. We defined God’s will in two categories: His sovereign will, that which God will bring about and *cannot* be missed, and His moral will (commands, moral standards). The “individual will of God for me in every decision *that I’m supposed to figure out*” does not exist. We need to set aside all superstitious methodologies and press on to see how God intended for us to make decisions.
- E. We demonstrated from God’s Word that God’s will for our lives is not lost--*so we can quit looking for it!*
1. It is God’s will that you **be saved**. **Acts 17:30-31**
 2. It is God’s will that you be **filled with His Spirit**. **Ephesians 5:17-18**
 3. It is God’s will that you be **sanctified** (holy/set apart). **Romans 12:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:3**
 4. It is God’s will that you be **submissive**.
 - a. To God—obedient to the Great Commission and Great Commandment **James 4:7**
 - b. To the elders **Hebrews 13:17**
 - c. To one another **Ephesians 5:21**
 - d. To worldly government/authority **1 Peter 2:13-15**
 5. It is God’s will that you **suffer**. **Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:19**
 6. It is God’s will that you be **thankful**. **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**
 7. It is God’s will that you be **wise**. **Ephesians 5:15-16**
- F. Our Biblical decision making model is simple (but not easy) --*Do the wisest thing*.
1. Entire sections of inspired Scripture are dedicated to wisdom... It’s purpose is... decision making!
 2. **Godly** wisdom encompasses obedience, holiness, etc ...
- II. **Breakout--discuss among yourselves the possible reproach of unbiblical models for decision making.**

III. Group Discussion/Q&A

Schedule for Upcoming Sundays:

Apr 24 - Off -- Resurrection Celebration

*May 1 - Wk 5 -- Fear of Man -- *Clarus--Consider both services and catch up by notes*

May 8 - Wk 6 -- Fruits of the Spirit I

May 15 - Wk 7 -- Fruits of the Spirit II

May 22 - Wk 8 -- Fruits of the Spirit III

May 29 - Off -- Memorial Day weekend

June 5 - Wk 9 -- Fruits of the Spirit IV

Suggested Reading:

The Heart of Evangelism-Section IV Ch. 27-38

Decision Making and the Will of God--Class Notes available at:

<http://objectivegospel.org/training/DecisionMaking/>