

Taking it Home:

- Carefully read 1 Corinthians 5:9-13. The Apostle Paul includes some rather strong exhortations in this passage. How might you discern when and how to employ these exhortations today in your realm of influence? Should you even consider these things?
- How should the church employ the exhortations of 1 Corinthians 5:9-13? For example, if a mainline denomination chooses to tolerate those things that depart from biblical values, what should be the response of the people within that denomination? And if a church does take a stand regarding such matters, how far should it go, and in what spirit?
- The telephone rings and it's your sister. She wants to join you for Thanksgiving, and would like to bring the woman she is dating with her to your home. You very much want your sister (and even her partner) to know the love and grace of Jesus. What kind of questions should you ask yourself to discern what your next step should be? And then: what are those next steps?

Lies the Church Believes

Lie #4: Tolerance is More Important Than Righteousness

Revelation 2:25

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Lie #4: Tolerance is More Important Than Righteousness

Notes:

Growth Group Homework

For the week of August 22, 2010

Revelation 2:25

Quick Review: It has become commonplace in churches today to replace distinctly biblical values with values that the public square perceives to be correct. When this happens it is done under the auspices of *tolerance*, and any challenge to this is considered to be naïve at best and mean-spirited at worst. Indeed, churches embracing this notion of tolerance suggest that by so doing they are loving and liberating and that this is exactly what Jesus would want. But while such thinking can be alluring, Jesus himself declares that churches going this direction are “seducing my servants” and must, therefore, “repent” (Revelation 2:20, 21).

My Story

- A handful of mainline denominations throughout North America have gone to great lengths to meet social challenges such as adultery, homosexuality and abortion with measures of tolerance that depart from traditional standards, causing much confusion, division and even disillusionment. In what ways has this phenomenon personally impacted you? Think carefully about your own spiritual journey, what impact these matters may have on your friends or family, and what choices you may or may not have made in light of these developments.
- A number of Christian organizations have rejected efforts to look tolerably upon issues such as abortion or homosexuality and the like, and have gained a reputation for ostracizing those who struggle with these matters, for lacking understanding regarding social justice, and for being generally mean-spirited. What is your assessment of this characterization and why?
- Have you ever had anyone come to you and tell you that he or she is a homosexual? Contemplating an abortion? Having an affair? Are these things that you personally have struggled with? Are you right now? What resources might you turn to for help and hope? Have you told anyone, and if so, what was the response?

Growing Deeper

- The New Testament makes it clear that Jesus loved spending time with the disenfranchised, the broken, the sinful, and the needy. Indeed, Mark 2:15 says, “And as he reclined at table in [Levi’s] house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.” What do passages like this say about Jesus’ interest in people? Is this an interest that you share? To what extent does “tolerance” play a role here?
- That same passage in the Gospel of Mark finds Jesus saying “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (2:17). Scrutinizing the statement carefully, it is evident that Jesus seeks to make those who are sick (the “sinners”) well. This implies some kind of healing and transformation. What are the implications of this transformation and healing on the matter of tolerance and acceptance? Or, more specifically, what is the greater goal: tolerance or transformation?