

# THE SEARCH FOR GENUINE CHRISTIANITY - #7

Guy Orbison, Jr.

This will be the last article on this subject for the moment. We may wish to engage in further discussions of these matters in the future, but for now I would like to conclude with a few thoughts about the attitudes that are necessary to possess genuine Christianity.

It is possible to search and find the “essentials” of practice in Christianity and still not possess genuine Christianity. One may do the right things for the wrong reasons. One may be outwardly right, but inwardly wrong. The church in Sardis had a name that they were “*alive*,” but in reality they were “*dead*” (Rev. 3:1). Annanias and Sapphira also did what appeared to be the right thing in giving their funds, but it was all for show (Acts 5:1-6). Jesus warned us in the Sermon on the Mount to beware of practicing righteousness just to be seen of men (Matt. 5:1f.). Thus, our motives and attitudes play a part in whether we possess genuine Christianity or not.

There are certain attitudes that must be in place for us to be the kind of people God wants us to be. These attitudes are also essential for us to maintain unity. If we do not possess these desires, then we will be no different than the world around us. And, without them, we will soon be acting like the world in biting and devouring one another (Gal. 5:15). We will briefly discuss four attitudes or desires that are necessary...

## A Genuine Desire For Truth

Let me first approach this negatively in showing what I do not mean. Genuine Christianity is not a desire to “connect with culture” as some are promoting today. These claim that if we do not change with a changing culture by adjusting our doctrine, then we will die like the dinosaurs. Specifically, they are advocating that we rethink our positions on such matters as the role of women, the instrument, divorce, and even baptism.

In like manner, genuine Christianity cannot be achieved with an attitude of being “politically correct.” Some insist that we will be considered outcasts if we do not adjust our political views. They would have us ease up on our preaching about hell and lay off the subject of homosexuality.

Again, genuine Christianity is not a search for a church that “meets my needs.” Some in looking for a “church home” are really not interested in truth, but in comfort. The questions these searchers ask of a church have to do with what programs are offered and how the church can benefit them. They are not looking to serve but to be served. They do not want truth... they are looking for entertainment.

The search for genuine Christianity requires a deep desire for the truth. Jesus said, “*If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:31,32). Those who do not want the truth will actually turn against it. People who merely come together in the name of religion, but without a desire for truth may eventually even turn against one another. Even Paul had to ask the Galatians, “*Have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?*” (Gal. 4:16).

To seek Jesus is to seek the truth (John 14:6). Without a desire for possession of truth, we can easily be deceived (2 Thess. 2:9-12). Without truth, we are unable to recognize what is false and we are unable to distinguish between matters of faith and opinion. This inability has led to much unnecessary division among us.

## A Genuine Desire To Grow Spiritually

There will always be weak and immature Christians among us. The apostle Paul even gives instruction for how we must get along with one another while the immature are given time to grow (Romans 14:1-15:3). The weak can cause problems by demanding their way, thinking it is the Lord’s way. They may fall into sin, bringing shame upon a congregation. Those who remain in a state of weakness, never growing, soon settle into a superficial approach to Christianity. Religion becomes ritual to these and their worship is without

meaning as they merely go through the motions.

Obviously, remaining in a spiritually weak condition hinders one from possessing genuine Christianity. Paul said he continued to “*press on*” (Phil. 3:12-14) never being satisfied with where he was in his relationship with the Lord. Anyone desiring genuine Christianity will see the need to pursue the Christ life. These who have truly been “*crucified with Christ*” (Gal. 2:20) will continue to put to death the sinful deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13) in their pursuit to be like Jesus. If we are not striving to become like the Lord, then we are doomed to remain as we are. We will continue to act and think like the world and such will be evident by the strife and continued divisions among us (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

### **A Genuine Commitment To Fellow Christians**

Some people merely join up with a church and become a pew sitter. Congregations tend to have people out on the fringe who never really see themselves as a functioning part of the body of Christ. People who are not involved in Christ’s work and those who only attend the worship assembly sporadically have not found genuine Christianity.

Paul admonished the Roman Christians to “*be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord...*” (see Rom. 12:9-16). Those who show preference to the world over the church have not yet discovered genuine Christianity. These seem to make time for all worldly functions, but haven’t the time for their brothers. These, too, are often less forbearing in the sense that they are easily offended. We have seen some who wear their feelings on their sleeves and at the slightest disagreement, they are ready to depart and take as many with them as they can.

The search for genuine Christianity must incorporate a commitment to the Lord’s people. Paul entreated the Ephesians “*to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which*” they had been called (Eph. 4:1). One of the ways in which we walk worthy is to maintain unity: “*with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (Eph. 4:2,3). The attitude that we may choose to split a church and begin another when we are dissatisfied misses the mark of genuine Christianity.

### **A Strong Trust In God**

Genuine Christianity realizes that God’s way is not only the best way, but the only way. This means that even though we may not like what God has said or prefer something other than what God has required, we will trust God’s judgment rather than our own.

God always tests the genuineness of our faith. The test question is simply, “Do we really trust Him?” He tested Abraham by requiring the sacrifice of his son, Isaac. Job was tested by God (and tempted by Satan) through the attacks made upon his earthly comfort. James declares the necessity of such testing because it is required to produce “*endurance*” and thus complete our faith (James 1:2-4). Genuine faith must possess endurance... the never give up attitude.

Not everyone trusts God. At the first challenge to their faith, some are willing to give up. That’s because they measure things by the standards of this world. The children of Israel saw themselves as “*grasshoppers*” in view of the mighty nations of the promised land (Num. 13:17-33). They refused to trust God, and by so doing, they refused to take the land God wanted them to have.

People who trust God have the attitude that His way is better. Thus, they will not follow human traditions or agendas in regard to doctrine. They will listen to the Lord.

These four do not make an exhaustive list of all attitudes that are necessary, but they are primary. These are vital to our search for genuine Christianity.