

CAN WE TEACH THE TRUTH AND NEVER BE OFFENSIVE?

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Often Christians are put on the spot when asked if they think people from various denominations or religions are going to hell. Most of the time the motive behind such questions are to make the Christian appear narrow-minded, unloving, and judgmental—to incite the emotions of listeners in order to persuade them. Our present culture pressures us not to offend anyone. Incidentally, anything for which we take a stand can be offensive to someone, so this social trend pressures us against standing for anything. But can a Christian be accepting of all religious beliefs, or faiths? Can a Christian refuse to take a stand and be pleasing to God? Can't a Christian just be broad-minded and assume that everyone is heaven bound?

Paul Sain wrote, "There is no room for broad-mindedness in the chemical laboratory. Water is composed of two-parts hydrogen and one-part oxygen. Deviation is forbidden. There is no room for broad-mindedness in music. There are only eight notes in an octave. In the mathematics classroom, things are narrow. Geometry, calculus, nor trigonometry allows zero variation from accuracy. The solution to the problem is either right or it is wrong. On the athletic field the game is played by the rules. How then, shall we expect that broad-mindedness shall rule in the realm of Christianity and morals?" It is indeed puzzling how one can so be logical in one case and so illogical in another.

I'll never forget an interview that appeared on CNN that shows what inoffensive, broad-minded Christianity looks like (watch at https://youtu.be/pKF_QgNezBY). Larry King was interviewing Joel Osteen; the bottom of the screen read, "Sr. Pastor of the largest congregation in the U.S. Lakewood Church, Houston." Larry asked Joel with regards to salvation, "What if you are a Jew (keep in mind Larry King is a Jew) or a Muslim and you don't accept Christ at all?" Joel stumbled around trying to find the least offensive answer, finally saying, "I don't know if I believe they are wrong... but what I believe from the Christian faith is..." Then finally he said, "I don't know about the Indians religion [Hindu-Polytheism; BPH] but I know they love God, and I've seen their sincerity so I don't know." Joel was somehow unsure of God's judgment toward those who worship other gods, when God has made it so plain throughout His entire word (Exo. 20:3-5 et. al.)! What a shame that this man who's influence reaches millions, would prefer a non-offensive answer to the truth. Then a caller from Phoenix, Arizona, who was also a Osteen fan/viewer, called in and asked him why he side-stepped Larry's question when the Bible clearly states, "*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*" (John 14:6) Then Joel agreed with the caller! So Larry asks him, "Then you do believe those who do not know Christ are going to hell," to which Joel again says, "I just don't know." So Larry sums up what he is getting from Joel by saying, "So you pass judgment on no one. What about an atheist?" Joel, "No, I just think God will have to look at their heart."

Joel in his attempt to not offend anyone is seen as a fraud by everyone: Larry King, the caller, and bloggers weighing in on the clip posted on YouTube. One blogger stated, "Wow! He just can't say it. He sidestepped the whole time and the scary thing is he speaks to thousands! He just kept saying he 'speaks the truth' but will not actually say what 'the truth' is..."

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) Jesus didn't say I'm one way among many ways and you can go your own way. He didn't say I'm a truth among many truths, and you can believe your own truth. He didn't say I'm a life among many lives, and you can live the way you want to live. He said I am THE WAY, THE TRUTH, and THE LIFE. That is exclusive, narrow minded, and will be offensive to some, but it's right!

How different the teaching of Christ and Joel Osteen! When someone asks you such a question, will you answer like Christ or like Osteen?