

Plain & Simple

The Issue of Influence

An Issue is an important matter that needs to be discussed and dealt with.

Today we are faced with many issues. One of them has to do with preachers who influence people far beyond the borders of their local churches. We are also faced with scores of para-church ministries that reach Christians all over the world.

An Influence is the ability or power to have an effect on the behavior of someone.

Today we have many large ministries running under the banner of fundamentalism that are influencing people around the world. Does God expect us to remain silent when someone under the banner of fundamentalism promotes heresy? Does God expect us to expose someone who has this kind of influence if he is guilty of immorality? Does God expect us to be silent when preachers with world-wide influence support their immoral, heresy promoting, friends?



The Scriptures Are Plain And Simple. David was one of God's very special people. His name occurs 1139 times in the Bible. God referred to David as "...a man after mine own heart." (Acts 13:22) However, when David became immoral God did not cover it up. We read "*And the LORD sent Nathan unto David.*" (Second Samuel 12:1) Nathan confronted David about his sin and God had it written in the Bible for all to see. God also exposed the failures of Adam and Eve, Noah, Samson, Moses, Abraham, Aaron, Eli, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve sons of Israel and others.

Before any New Testament instructions were written in what we call pastoral epistles regarding the structure of a local church, Jesus commanded His followers to "*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*" (John 7:24) Jesus asked "*Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?*" (Luke 12:57)

Concerning the pastor of the local church, if he was proven to be guilty of "...an accusation" (a charge that someone has done something that would not be acceptable unto the Lord) Paul said, "*Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.*" (First Timothy 5:19,20) When writing to Christians in general, Paul said "*Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.*" (Second Thessalonians 3:6) How are "...the brethren" going to do that if they don't know who it is that "...walketh disorderly"? Paul said to the Christians in the same church, "*And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*" (Second Thessalonians 3:14) How are they going to "...note that man" if that man is not exposed? To note something or someone is "...to remark upon something, in order to draw someone's attention to it."

It is plain and simple! "*For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God...*" (First Peter 4:17)

The Christians Peter was writing to were not being warned about an impending judgment of God. That would be totally out of context with the preceding chapters. They were Christians whose faith was on trial and they needed to make some serious judgments concerning their circumstances. They needed to come to proper conclusions and make decisions. It was in this context that Peter said, "*...judgment must begin at the house of God...*" Peter was telling these godly Christians that the people who made up their local church needed to correctly judge what was going on at that time. They needed to "...judge righteous judgment." (John 7:24) It is time for us to answer the question Jesus asked "*...why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?*" (Luke 12:57)