

You Cannot Accommodate

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Introduction:

Pastor Moss spoke on God's standard for the Churches – what the church is; how it functions; its unity; its purity; its indwelling life; etc. These are not personal opinions or personal preferences, but rather they are a matter of revelation from God Himself.

He also mentioned the Scriptures as God's standard for truth and doctrine. It is my task to develop this thought a step further and to remind us all - that when the present generation (our generation) seeks to make changes to God's perfect standard, it is our responsibility to refuse to accommodate them.

The Concept of Being "Accommodating"

In a Good Sense (Pleasing Others)

The term "accommodate" is defined as: "to make room for; to make things convenient for; to give consideration to; to allow for; to bring into agreement; to reconcile." In that sense, I find the folks at Middletown Bible Church to be very accommodating. They make things convenient for us as conference goers. They provide us with food and other accommodations. They are accommodating in a good sense.

Rom. 15:2-3a - *"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself."*

In this passage, Paul is speaking about being selfless, and bending over backwards to please others and to meet their needs. In other words, being

accommodating (pleasing others) in this sense is being selfless - like Christ. We should strive for that. Paul did.

I Cor. 10:33 - *"Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."* Paul teaches us to be accommodating in a good sense.

In a Bad Sense (Being a Man-Pleaser)

But there is a more sinister side to pleasing others. It is godly to please others unto their edification. It is ungodly to be men-pleasers.

Galatians 1:10 – *"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."*

In this context, pleasing men is evil. Men-pleasers are not serving Christ. They are serving another master... contrary to the will of Christ.

I Thess. 2:4-5 – *"But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words..."*

Here Paul states that he was NOT a man pleaser. He did not flatter or butter people up. In this sense, pleasing men is evil – and God will judge us for it. He tries our hearts.

When we talk about accommodating men and pleasing men, we need to keep these two distinctions separate: there is a good and a bad sense. We should be accommodating in the ordinary things of life. But we should NEVER be accommodating when it comes to God's standard.

How the Process of Accommodation to Error Works

In light of this, we need to be concerned about the changes to God's Standards that we see in the churches all around us. We live in a culture of corruption – morally, socially, economically, and politically – but most importantly, spiritually. We also live in a culture of accommodation to

corruption. We gradually become accustomed to it. It begins to seem normal.

This culture of accommodation makes it fashionable to view all opinions as being equally valid and acceptable. It is a culture of tolerance – which views the greatest sin as one who has the audacity to say, “This is right and that is wrong.” This culture of corruption and accommodation has infected and affected the churches.

Of course, the process of corruption (leavening) has been going on in the churches since the Day of Pentecost. It has been a slow and gradual leavening process (corruption) of God’s plan for His Body for 2000 years now.

Small accommodations, over time, result in huge changes. Just think of how Massachusetts came to make gay marriage legal. It didn’t happen in the days of the Pilgrims or the Puritans. You might have been burnt at the stake as a witch for raising the issue. And it didn’t even happen in 1900. Homosexuals existed, but the closet doors were nailed shut. In the 1960s they started taking the nails out and opened the door a crack. And in the last 50 years or so the minds of Americans have been gradually acclimated to gay marriage by promoting an attitude or mood of acceptance, relativism, various strains of multiculturalism, and a spirit of tolerance and accommodation. You could never have introduced such an idea in Puritan New England ... but gradually the mood has changed. Today the time is ripe to make it happen. So how did we get from the Puritan MA Bay Colony to the place where gay marriage is legal? One tiny accommodation at a time. 200 years of slowly chipping away ... and changing attitudes ... changing the mood ... and over time, the frog is cooked. It doesn’t take a lot; it just takes a little leaven (over time) to leaven the whole lump.

Accommodation begins by tolerating that first tiny baby step in the wrong direction – but it never stops there. There are those who seek to change the direction of a country or a church. When someone attempts to oppose them, their argument is always the same: You’re making a mountain out of a molehill. It’s not worth fighting over one little baby step. We would wholeheartedly agree; but one step always

leads to another. It's not just the *distance* each individual change or step. The first baby step may not be very far away at all. It is the *direction* of that step ... and where that direction will lead you over time. One small step out of line and in the wrong direction, leads a person very far away over time ... as the steps continue. Therefore, you HAVE to draw a line somewhere ... and people will always argue over the line.

Those who don't want to fight over the details will just keep on making accommodations ... and will keep on allowing the line to drift to the left inch by inch until you find yourself in a very different place.

Every child knows how accommodation works. They use this tactic on their parents all the time. When the answer is "no" they just keep on nagging, chipping away, complaining, murmuring, threatening; crying relentlessly (you're mean; everyone else is doing it; I'm going to run away; I hate you; you'll be sorry when I leave! etc.). This goes on and on until the parent accommodates their child ... caves in and says what the child wanted to hear all along: "yes." Over time, the "no" turned into a "yes."

This same thing happens in the local church too. Fundamental, dispensational churches today – who are trying to maintain and preserve God's standard of truth and God's concept of the Body – are facing pressures like never before. By now we are all painfully aware of the big push to jump on the bandwagon and join the "New Calvinists" crowd. There is a widespread abandonment of dispensational theology and of the doctrine of separation taking place right under our noses. There is unrelenting pressure to cave in to the dumbing down of the churches and to bring trendy pop-rock music into the churches, and the change of mood and attitude that goes along with it. And for fundamentalists who refuse to go along with the crowd – if we refuse to accommodate them – our churches will simply die the slow death of attrition. I don't know about you, but I have never seen or felt such pressure to conform and accommodate as I do today. The pressure to cave in has always been around; but the likelihood and reality of our churches dying out is new ... and fearful.

It is sad beyond words to watch it happen right under our noses:

- fundamental churches that once flourished and prospered are now dwindling and struggling;
- fundamental churches that were once took a solid stand, separated FROM error and separated UNTO Christ, are now backing off from that Biblical position on separation; and are now reaching out and embracing all kinds of doctrinal deviations.
- churches that were once solidly dispensational are becoming "leaky" dispensationalists, and gradually discarding dispensationalism, one piece at a time ... and are inching their way back Reformed Theology.
- Not to mention the accommodation to a worldly lifestyle: drinking, dancing, rock concerts, night clubs; etc. that are becoming the norm.
- And we all know that once introduced, a little accommodation leads to a lot of accommodation; and these trends almost never reverse.

Having to deal with the pressure to accommodate day in and day out is, in part, what Paul meant when he wrote about "*fighting the good fight of the faith.*"

An Accommodating Spirit

In dealing with relentless push towards accommodation and compromise, it is not so much the baby step that we are confronted with ... or even the particular issue at hand. The real problem is much deeper; it lies in the mood and the attitude – the spirit of the age.

- It is a mindset that abhors the doctrine of separation.
- It is the mood of toleration...
- It is the non-judgmental spirit that dominates our culture today.
- It is a mood of broadmindedness ... a diversity of views ... a toleration for an eclectic mixture of doctrines...
- It is an attitude that has no stomach for rebuking error ... or anything negative.

You might say it is the mood of the world system which has infected the churches. The world system has been pushing in this direction for a long time now: toleration, non-judgmental, politically correct, all-inclusive, all-embracing, a form of multiculturalism which accepts all views as equally valid. It was always the case in dealing with the neo-evangelicalism in the

mid to late 1900s. But now we have a generation of young people whose whole lives have been lived in an incubator breathing this atmosphere ... from kindergarten through college ... they have been groomed to think this way ... it is engrained in them.

And even when these folks get saved, this mindset doesn't automatically disappear. They need to be transformed inwardly by the renewing of their minds. It takes time for Scripture to influence the way we think. The real battle we face is not so much this issue or that – but the mindset behind the unrelenting push for change. That's where teaching comes in ... driving truth deeper and deeper into the minds and hearts of men, women, and children.

And if we, as fundamentalists, don't stand up against the onslaught of changes to the Biblical Standard and if we choose to accommodate "baby steps" in the wrong direction, those steps will eventually bring us to ruin, spiritually. Today the push is to change sacred music into pop rock music. Today the push is to tolerate social drinking and dancing. Today the push is to go back to the doctrines of the Reformers. And who knows how far it will go? Eventually, the push will be to not tolerate sound doctrine at all - and especially not to tolerate fundamentalism.

Fundamentalists are the only opposition to the inevitable downgrade of the churches; no one else is confronting it. And change is inevitable. God said that in that day they *will not* endure sound doctrine ... and we are not going to change that. Even our best attempts at opposition to it won't prevent it from happening. God has included this downgrade in His plan for the end of the age. But that does not mean that we are to embrace it as something that is inevitable.

Reasons to Be Skeptical of an Accommodating Spirit

Any Change from Perfection is a Form of Deterioration

God's revelation is perfect. It is fixed. It is true and right; and let God be true and every man a liar. You *don't tinker* with God's standard. Changes to God's perfect standard never result in improvement – but always result in

deterioration and corruption. We are NOT to accommodate even a smidgen of corruption from God's perfect plan.

God's Standard of truth as revealed in Scripture doesn't need any updating or renovating or attempts to make it relevant to the 21st century. Men may attempt to make changes with the very best of intentions – but good intentions will never enhance the truth. Men (even Christian men) are attempting to make the church relevant to today ... to make the Bible relevant to today.

But God's Word is living – in every generation. It's not our job to make it relevant; it IS relevant because it is GOD'S WORD! It simply needs to be taught – exactly as it came forth from God's breath and incorporated into Scripture.

This should make us hesitant about jumping on board with all the changes taking place in the churches today. Change isn't always an improvement.

Prophesied Changes in the Last Days

Knowing what the New Testament tells us to expect in the last days should also make us a little cautious about accommodating change too quickly.

We certainly should not be hasty about making radical changes to the church just because everyone else is doing it – especially if we know the Scriptures which teach us what to look for in the last days:

- In the last days, perilous times shall come. (II Tim. 3:1)
- Some shall depart from the faith. (I Tim. 4:1)
- Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (II Tim. 3:7)
- They shall not endure sound doctrine. (II Tim. 4:3)
- They shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears...
- They shall turn away from the truth. (II Tim. 4:4)
- They bring in damnable heresies, and many shall follow their pernicious ways – and the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.... (II Peter 2:2)

In light of these statements, (and countless more just like them) when we see the evangelical world taking a sharp turn to the left, don't you think we should at least be hesitant to jump onboard and follow that crowd?

Prophesied Deterioration of the Church from a Chaste Virgin to the Babylonian Harlot

Revelation 17:4-6 – “And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:
⁵And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.
⁶And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration (*astonishment*).”

We also know what the New Testament teaches about the general direction of the church in the last days: The church began as a *chaste virgin*. The church ends up as a *religious prostitute* – part of the Babylonian system ... characterized by spiritual adultery. The New Testament tells us that it will be a gradual transition FROM a church that started off small, poor, hated by the world, separate and distinct from the world (but pure and holy) TO a church that is rich, powerful, riding on the back of the beast, large and popular in the world system (but totally corrupt, defiled, and impure). The apostate ecclesiastical system will be “decked in gold and precious stones and pearls.” The apostate system will flourish splendidly in the world. But church age saints who live godly in Christ Jesus (remnant) shall suffer persecution in this world system (II Tim. 3:12-13). This harlot religious system will rise in power, popularity, riches, and grandeur; but the true churches have no such hope in this world. This world is not our home.

The true church becomes a tiny remnant ... despised and rejected of men. We will be relegated to some tiny corner somewhere. True believers will appear to be losers UNTIL manifestation of the sons of God. Then we shall appear as what we really are in Christ: more than conquerors! But the world and our evangelical brothers see us as losers today. We are seen as old fashioned, out of date, irrelevant, dinosaurs, who refuse to make changes and deserve to die a slow death of attrition ... as we are seeing young people leaving in droves.

If we believe what the New Testament teaches about general direction of the churches in the last days – we should be a little gun shy about accommodating changes to God’s Standards (doctrine and lifestyle). Wisdom demands it.

Before we make a change, we want to know what direction the change will take us. It is the nature of fundamentalism to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good; and abstain from all appearance of evil.” That requires making judgments – in a world that hates making judgments. Fundamentalists don’t jump on popular band wagons easily. We want to know ahead of time where that wagon is going. With the breathtaking volume of changes being proposed today (moral and doctrinal) we should be slow and deliberate before embracing anything; careful and prayerful; wise and discerning – and not just jumping on board whatever new thing comes down the pike – just because it is marketed as the latest and the greatest cool new thing.

New Testament Commands Concerning Preserving Truth

When it comes to God, His plan, His purposes, His Word, and His truth, the Bible gives us some clear instructions:

- Be ye steadfast, unmovable...
- Continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel...
- Beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ...
- Be not: tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine...
- Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness...
- Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught...
- That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand ... stand therefore.
- The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth...

When I read these passages I don’t get the idea that God wants us to be constantly looking for ways to change and update God’s Standards. It is NOT the task of the church to attempt to make God’s Standard cool, hip, and

relevant to each succeeding generation. Our task is to STAND undaunted against everyone that seeks to change God's standards. We are to be steadfast, unmovable, rooted and grounded, to stand and withstand, to be a pillar and ground, an unshakeable foundation. You don't move the ancient landmarks!

Our God-given task is NOT to TWEAK God's standard to make it acceptable TO the next generation; our task is to PRESERVE God's Standard FOR the next generation – exactly as delivered to us. Christ gave a heavenly standard to Paul. Paul's assignment was to pass the same thing (unchanged) on to Timothy who passed the same thing on to other faithful men.

The fundamentalist's hesitancy to accept change has been variously described by opponents as:

- Old people just don't like change; change is hard for them.
- Those old fundamentalists are just like the Amish; they don't like anything new; they refuse to embrace technology.
- They are just stuck in the past.

There may be a few isolated cases where that might be true of some fundamentalists; then shame on them. But that is not an accurate assessment of fundamentalism. It is not a matter of refusing to embrace technology. It's not a matter of hating the concept of change. It's not a matter of being stuck in the past. It is a matter of adhering to God's Standards against the onslaught of those relentlessly seek to chip away at the foundation – one little piece at a time.

The Speed of Change towards a One World System

Consider man's original desire for a one world system.

Genesis 11:4 – "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

Long before the church age, God revealed His plan for mankind: fill the earth and multiply. But men thought they had a better idea and they decided to change God's plan and insert their own. They did not scatter but build a city

– and a tower – and their own way to heaven – and an earthly kingdom. It was their plan to have a one world religion, a one world government, and a one world economic system at Babel. It seemed so much more efficient than God's plan. And because they did not scatter but remained together in one place, in one city, speaking one language, they were able to communicate with everyone – whenever they wanted. They didn't have to send posts out to faraway places. They could send a messenger throughout the city – and they had a virtual "instant messenger." They knew that if they were scattered, they would lose that.

Genesis 11:6 – "And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now *nothing will be restrained from them*, which they have imagined to do."

God understood the incredible potential for evil if mankind remained together and could communicate with everyone quickly. Moses recorded God's assessment of that exact situation: "nothing would be restrained from them which they imagined to do." If you have read through Genesis you know that the imagination of man was not described in good terms by God.

Genesis 6:11-12 – "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."

The corruption of God's perfect standard for mankind would be accelerated if all mankind gathered together as one. Man's sought to reach unto heaven by means of a tower ... a one world religion. This was a corruption of God's perfect plan. God's plan was through the blood of Christ. Man's plan was to create a one world kingdom without Christ. This too was a corruption of God's perfect plan, God's plan for an earthly Kingdom that involved His Beloved Son establishing an earthly, Messianic, Mediatorial kingdom.

God scattered mankind in order to postpone the rapid deterioration and corruption of His plan. God confounded their languages so that they could not communicate with each other (vs.7). God scattered them all around the earth (vs.8). This postponed man's dream of a "one world system."

What makes today's modern world so different is the fact that technology (while it certainly can be used for good) has had the effect of bringing man's dream of a one world system closer to reality.

- The printing press – used to print God's Word was also used to spread evil.
- Then came the telephone – and the world was becoming more and more connected.
- Television also brought distant places into our living rooms.
- The airplane made the world a much smaller place.

It has made the world much smaller and the last 100 years brought tremendous change – and much more rapidly than in all previous centuries. But in the last 20 years with the advent of the internet and social media, the speed of change and has skyrocketed, radically changing man's ability to communicate ideas. Communication is now possible with everyone everywhere instantly.

While these are all wonderful advances that we all benefit from, let's keep in mind that Satan is the god of this world system. We use these advances and thank God for them, but don't forget that Satan also uses them to advance his purposes. And one result of man's creative inventions has been a virtual reversing of what God did in Genesis 11. We can say today: "now nothing will be restrained from them which they imagined to do."

What's different today is that the corrupt imaginations of fallen men are virtually unrestrained today. This is different than in ages past. At the ancient Babylon, God interrupted man's ability to communicate and God separated mankind around the globe. As we approach the one world Babylonian system of the end times, God has allowed man's technology to virtually reverse the restraint God put on the speed of corruption. Change is occurring faster than we can digest.

Being aware of history and prophecy – knowing where God said the political, economic, and religious world (Babylon) is headed, should also make us just a bit leery about accommodating all the latest trends. The speed of change has widened the gap between God's standard and the standards of churches today. A radical transformation of our country is underway; and a radical transformation of the churches is also underway. These changes are not insignificant and superficial; it's much more than mere window-dressing. For

centuries in America, society honored Biblical standards. For many years, the church held the banner a couple of notches higher than society – and seemed to get away with that. But with the moral freefall our culture has taken recently, the churches have fallen right along with it. The churches are still two notches above the world ... but in a culture that is slouching towards Gomorrah, that's not a standard to boast about. We should have been holding on to God's unchangeable standard all along – not just being content to be two notches above society.

After 2000 years of change and decay, the gap between where the church is today (morally and spiritually) and where God's standard is – is shamefully wide. This should be cause to pause before we accept any more of the "great ideas" coming out of the evangelical world.

The Example of Ezekiel: He Refused to Accommodate

Ezekiel 3:4 – "And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them."

God teaches us another important lesson on accommodation through His words to the prophet Ezekiel. God sent the prophet to preach "My Words" to his people.

Ezekiel 3:7 – "But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted."

God predicted that the people would not listen. They hated what they heard: "Thus saith the Lord." They had no stomach for the message Ezekiel was to deliver. His message was a bitter pill to swallow: Babylon is coming and they would conquer Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 3:8 – "Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads."

The picture here is that of heads butting against one another. God said that the people of Israel had hard foreheads and they were using them to head butt against Ezekiel in defiant opposition. The rebel's foreheads were hard as rock – unbending; set in their rebellious, worldly ways. They would not listen

to God's Standard. There would be no response. God's desire was that the people would be tender hearted, responsive, like soft, pliable clay in the hands of the potter. Instead, they were hardened ... and you could see it on their faces! A potter cannot work with hardened clay. It is good for nothing! They were set in their ways like hardened cement. You could see it on their face – that look of deep rooted determination to do their own thing. They were not backing down, no matter what.

Ezekiel faced incredible pressure to go along ... to whisper sweet nothings in their ear ... to capitulate to the crowds ... to accommodate the mood of the day. Boy do I feel that kind of pressure today – like never before. And by way of confession – I am not up for the task of standing against that kind of pressure. I find it overwhelming at times; too much for me. To watch people that you love leave the church and head off elsewhere – to throw off the yoke of fundamentalism (Biblical separation) ... to watch all the young people march off to the pop culture churches is painful beyond words. This is especially so when it is your own family. This is why Ezekiel is my hero. He was flesh and blood just like us; he was no different. He was constantly being head butted by those who were trying to wear him out. This was his never ending battle.

Ezekiel 3:9 – “As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.”

I love God's promise in this verse! God was not going to make the opposition go away. God didn't even slow down the head butting or make it less brutal. Instead, God promised to make Ezekiel's forehead harder than theirs – like an adamant, harder than flint! They could butt against him all they wanted; but Ezekiel would not bend... he would not crack... he would not shatter.

God promised to make Ezekiel just as “determined” to uphold God's standard, as they were in promoting their apostasy! They were unbending, unyielding, uncompromising, adamant, and inflexible in their rebellion. Ezekiel would be equally unyielding, uncompromising, adamant, and inflexible in the ways of the Lord! Their foreheads were hard as a rock. Ezekiel's forehead would be “*harder* than flint.” When God calls a man to a task, He equips him for it. This was a determination to preach what is right and uphold God's standard – regardless of the opposition and regardless of the price he must pay.

This is exactly what we need today – more than ever! And this is exactly what God supplies! Our job is not to accommodate the downgrade in the churches. Our task is to stand against it and to refuse to capitulate to it. And

as our generation seeks to “re-invent” the concept of what the assembly is ... and radically transform what worship is... they will relentlessly hammer away at us ... chipping away, trying to get us to lower the standards ... to not be so picky about doctrine ... to discard dispensationalism and separation ... to just go along to get along ... *we don't have to bend ... or crack...* May God give us foreheads harder than flint ... and hearts that are soft, tender, and pliable in God's hand.