

Speaking Truth In Love

The story is told of a Marine recruiting sergeant who happened upon an impressive sight while traveling the backwoods country. At a roadside farm, he saw targets painted everywhere – on the barns, on fences, and on all the outbuildings; and exactly in the center of each target's bull's eye there was a bullet hole! Knowing the Marine Corps could use a marksman like that, the sergeant stopped at the farmhouse in hopes of recruiting this sharpshooter. His knock on the door was answered by a gangling, barefoot lad of a not-too-bright appearance who proudly admitted that he had made the targets and bullet holes. The sergeant asked him how he managed to get a perfect bull's eye with every shot. He drawled, "Aw, that's easy, Sarge. I jes' shoot first, an' then I paint rings around the bullet hole!"

A lot of people make bull's eyes in religion like that too. They "shoot" first by committing themselves to some religious position or affiliation, then later, when necessary, seek to justify their actions by "painting" the target rings with some kind of after-thought "authority" like personal feelings or sincerity.

All such efforts ignore the fact that only God has the right to make the "target" and that His word is the "bulls eye" for which all men are to strive (sin is missing His mark). Coming to Jesus Christ and salvation is impossible apart from hearing and learning His will (Jn 6:44-45); and abiding in Christ means abiding in His teaching (2 Jn 9). Therefore, all right relationships with the Lord involve a right relationship with Bible truth (Col 3:17; 1 Pet 4:11).

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