

That doesn't sound much like Jesus was willing to "go along to get along" does it? That doesn't seem tolerant or inclusive and certainly not politically correct — but it was right! There is little doubt that Jesus offended a lot of people that day!

The church and Christians are at war with the world, the flesh and the devil. Perhaps it's time for Christians everywhere to renew their commitment to following the words given to us by Paul in Ephesians 6:10-20.

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **Put on the full armor of God** so that you can **take your stand against the devil's schemes**. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand your ground**, and after you have done everything, to stand. **Stand firm then, with the belt of truth** buckled around your waist, **with the breastplate of righteousness** in place, and **with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace**. In addition to all this, **take up the shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**. And **pray in the Spirit** on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, **be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints**. **Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains**. **Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.**” (NIV)*

This Scripture sounds like war. It is war! It's war against the devil's schemes. Yet it says that it is the “*gospel of peace*” that makes us ready for this war. To deliberately betray these marching orders is nothing short of treason in God's court. We cannot have respect for the sins that we are being asked to accept in the name of “tolerance” without committing treason against our sovereign God. We must get on one side or the other and declare who we are for. A friend of the world is the enemy of God. Who is on the Lord's side? Joshua chose to be!

“But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”
(Joshua 24:15 NIV)

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DILIGENCE

“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.” — Hebrews 6:11

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Is It Tolerance — Or Is It Treason?

There was a 40 year old bachelor who was looking for the perfect woman — one who was a cross between Wonder Woman and Betty Crocker. As he took his seat on the airplane one day, he couldn't help but notice that he was seated right beside the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Almost breathlessly he said to her, “So just what kind of man is it that you find attractive?” She said, “Well, I like Indian men because they're always tall, dark and handsome. But I also like Jewish men because their usually intelligent and wealthy. But there's something inside of me that's attracted to macho men. I guess I kind of like the pick up truck with the gun rack in the back window.” She then turned to him and said, “So what's your name?” He answered; “My name's Geronimo Goldstein, but my friends call me “Bubba.”

We don't usually tell jokes in *Diligence* but this one illustrates so well the point we want to make in this issue. It's obvious that the fellow in this story thought he would impress this young lady by trying to be “all things” to her. But it's not possible to be all things to all people without at the very least, compromising something in which we believe or at the worst, just plain lying as “Geronimo” obviously did.

Since the title of this article suggests that tolerance might in fact sometimes be treason, let's look a bit closer at each of those words. *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary* defines treason as “an act of deliberate betrayal.” That same dictionary defines tolerance as “a willingness to recognize and respect the beliefs or practices of others; a permissible difference.”

Christians today are being asked to tolerate a variety of beliefs and practices that requires compromising many principles laid down by God in His Word. An example of this would be the issue of partial birth abortion. One would have to admit that the very act of a partial birth abortion is in fact a *deliberate* betrayal of the value God places on human life. Another example might be that of being asked to tolerate an active homosexual lifestyle. To insist that Christians should be willing to respect such practices as those above cannot be called a *permissible* difference. It is instead an act of *deliberate betrayal* of God's commands.

There is a move afloat in America as well as in many churches today that says if we, as Christians and as Americans *fail* to be tolerant of new ideas and teachings (often referred to as “progress”) we are unloving, divisive, unable to accept

change and are not inclusive of those whose ideas or moral values differ from those of our own. This is simply a ploy for opening a way to undermine God's Word.

As Christians, we can't be tolerant of *everything* in order to be accepted by (or not be offensive to) the world. We can't always just "go along to get along." We can't be all things to all people and still be acceptable to God. We *can* not be inclusive when it comes to tolerance that requires disobedience to the Word. The Bible is not inclusive. The Bible divides!

"...Moses...said, Who is on the Lord's side?" (Exodus 32:26 KJV)

That's a statement of division!

"...a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4 KJV)

That's a statement of division! Jesus said:

"He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters." (Matthew 12:30 NIV)

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:34 NASB)

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." (Matthew 6:24 NASB)

Those are *all* statements of division! Some were made by Jesus Himself! As Christians, we are not called to be inclusive. We *are* called to be obedient to God and His Word. The Bible divides! It divides wheat from tares, sheep from goats, light from darkness, the broad road from the narrow road, love from hate, and yes, especially — the Bible divides the saved from the lost. *Everybody's* not going to heaven. *Only* the blood bought believers. The Scriptures *require* us to get on one side or the other and *declare* who it is we are for. Tolerating differences in America (or in churches) that are not permissible by the standards "spelled out" in God's Word is not tolerance. It is a deliberate betrayal of God and is treason in the court of heaven. Committing an act of treason causes one to forfeit all rights and privileges previously held by that individual. It is compromise with the enemy.

"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people." (Proverbs 14:34 NIV)

"Let those who love the Lord hate evil...." (Psalm 97:10 NIV)

Again, that's not inclusion. That's not "going along to get along." That's taking a stand against evil and declaring love for the Lord.

"Happy are you when people hate you, reject you, insult you, and say that you are evil, all because of the Son of Man! Be glad when that happens
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and dance for joy, because a great reward is kept for you in heaven...." (Luke 6:22 TEV)

"Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets." (Luke 6:26 NIV)

"...all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (II Tim. 3:12 KJV)

"Unfaithful people! Don't you know that to be the world's friend means to be God's enemy? If you want to be the world's friend, you make yourself God's enemy." (James 4:4 TEV)

If the world loves us and adores us and we seldom feel *any* discomfort *because* of taking a stand against sin and evil, it just may mean that we are *of* the world and are compromising God's Word in order to "go along to get along" *with* the world. We are here to please the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit — none other, especially not ourselves. Jesus said:

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you." (John 15:18 NIV)

If you think that as Christians, we will be *liked* by the world, think again. More than likely we will be called names such as "radical," "right-wing," "politically incorrect," "Bible thumpers," and an assortment of other degrading tags. So does this mean that we should try to appease the moral degradation of the world at the expense of "bending" God's Word so as not to offend anyone and therefore demonstrate what *some* would call "love"? The Scriptures we have read certainly don't support that. A deliberate betrayal of God's commands by accepting the world's standard of righteousness and truth is *treason* in the Kingdom of God.

So you say: "But, *Jesus* was tolerant." Was He? Remember He *did* manage to get Himself crucified. Let's look at some things He said to others.

"You belong to your father, the devil,..." (John 8:44 NIV)

"You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?" (Matt. 23:33 NIV)

What about the time He made a whip out of cords, went into the temple, turned over the tables and drove out the money changers and all of the cattle? Then He said:

"Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" (John 2:16 NIV)

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