

**ARE WE TOO DOGMATIC?**  
**Pro.14:12; 1Cor.1:10-13; Eph.4:4-6**  
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**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. What I mean by “We.” – Professed faithful servants of Christ, members of the churches of Christ, esp. gospel preachers.
2. “Dogmatic” is defined as “given to asserting or imposing personal opinions; arrogant; intolerantly authoritative; or even “positive in manner of utterance.”
3. The world has ever been critical of us and charged us with being too dogmatic, arrogant, opinionated, and narrow-minded, even bigoted and fanatical. Example:
  - a. “I wouldn’t be so narrow-minded in religion as to indict all others as wrong.” (But if the Lord has a way that is right, and he does, then all who do not follow that way are wrong! See Prov.14:12; Eph.4:4-6.
  - b. “That little bunch over there think they are the only ones up here!”
  - c. A preacher was asked: “Do you think you and your little bunch are the only ones who are going to heaven?”
    - (1) His answer: “Some of us will not make it!” Perhaps my wife and I are the only ones going. Sometimes I’m worried about her!”
  - d. Now some of our own digressive brethren are making the same charges against us!
4. Without a doubt, we are positive in our manner of speech. But are we right or wrong in this?
  - a. Does God want us to be positive in our manner of speech?
  - b. Are we dogmatic, arrogant, opinionated, and narrow-minded because we are positive in our manner of speech? – because we teach the Bible and its divine principles as something true and beyond dispute, which must be believed and obeyed in order to be saved here and hereafter?
5. Let us see if we are as we develop our lesson on the question: Are we too dogmatic?

**II. DISCUSSION**

**A. THE BIBLE REVEALS THAT GOD IS POSITIVE TO THE N'TH DEGREE.**

1. God, the Father, is, was, and will ever be positive in every statement of fact, every precept, every promise and or every threat he has ever uttered.
2. How could he be otherwise and be the infallible, immutable and true God who cannot lie?
3. To deny that God is positive and absolute is to limit his righteousness, his omnipotence, and his omniscience. Such would be infidelity!
4. God says what he means; means what he says; he does not deal in “maybe-sos,” “think-sos,” or “could-bes,” or “what difference does it make?”
5. He demands absolute submission to his will or sin results; he tolerates no quibbling, and respects no other way but his own!
6. Is God dogmatic? Arrogant? Opinionated? Narrow-minded? Harsh? Because he is so positive, certain, and sure? Should he be doubtful, less certain, or unsure and leave room for quibbling?
7. Some examples of God’s positiveness:
  - a. The Creation:
    - (1) The Bible’s declaration as to how it was done is positive; admits of no other, Gen.1:1,26a,27a; 2:7; Jno.1:1-3; Col.1:16; Heb.1:1,2.
    - (2) It was miraculous creation, not by some process of evolution.
    - (3) One must accept or reject the fact of this.
  - b. The Ark he commanded Noah to build. God was very positive about its construction, its occupants, and as to why it was to be built, Gen.6.
  - c. The Tabernacle. God was positive about how to built it, Exo.25:40; Heb.8:5.
  - d. The offering of Cain and Abel, Gen.4; Heb.11.
  - e. Moses to speak to the rock, Num.20:7,11,12.
    - (1) After this, no one could tell Moses God isn’t positive, or that it makes no difference as to “how”.
  - f. God was positive about keeping the Sabbath day, Exo.20:8; Num.15:32ff.
  - g. If in his promises, why not in his threats and warnings?

## **B. THE SON OF GOD WAS AND IS POSITIVE, CERTAIN, SURE, AND UNEQUIVOCAL.**

1. Since he was God in the flesh, he could not very well be any other way and do what he came to do!
2. Many of the plain, positive, cutting statements of Jesus are shocking to the falsely pious religionists of today who are afraid to make definite and plain statements for fear of someone's feelings and the subsequent charge of dogmatism being hurled at them.
  - a. This is plain, positive, dogmatic unbelief.
  - b. Jesus could be the kindest, most compassionate, and often was. But when necessary, which was often the case, he could be and was very severe.
  - c. Mt.23 gives Jesus' positive tirade against hypocrisy and self-righteousness. Cf. Mt.3.
3. Notice some of Jesus' "milder" positive statements:
  - a. Jno.4:24; Mt.15:1-9.
  - b. Divorce and remarriage, Mt.19:4-6,9.
    - (1) Cf. statement of Baptist Sunday School teacher, Kennett, Mo. relating to Mt.19:9: "This is too personal; we will skip this part of the chapter."
    - (2) Another: "That is no one else's business! Come on over and worship with us!" (Blytheville, Ark.)
    - (3) Still another from 40<sup>th</sup> & Hazel, Pine Bluff, Ark., relative to leaving and coming to 28<sup>th</sup> Ave. because he was unhappy where he was: "You wouldn't have me at 28<sup>th</sup> Ave. because I have been married before without a Scriptural divorce!"
  - c. Entering the kingdom and reaching heaven, Jno.3:5; Mt.7:21-27.
4. Was Jesus dogmatic, arrogant, narrow-minded? Am I, when I teach the same things he did with the same plainness of speech?
  - a. Example of L. H. Coleman, Baptist preacher, Pine Bluff, Ark., before the Home Economics class at Pine Bluff High Class in our question and answer discussion on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage – answering questions put to us by the class, when I had responded and specified what Jesus said about Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage: "I don't believe in playing God!"
  - b. My response to him: "Neither do I! But I do believe in teaching what God has said!"

**C. THE APOSTLES WERE PLAIN, CERTAIN, SURE, AND VERY POSITIVE IN THE THINGS THEY TAUGHT BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

1. They were positive about there being “One faith,” and “one body,” etc., Eph.4:4-6.
2. They were positive about reconciliation to God being “in” that “one body,” Eph.2:11-16.
3. They were also positive about how to get into Christ and into that one body where one is saved and reconciled to God, Rom.6:3,4; Gal.3:26,27
4. They were plain about religious division and wearing human names, 1Cor.1:10-13; Rom.16:17,18; 1Cor.3:1-5; 1Pet.4:16
  - a. No such blessing is promised in the name of Luther, Baptist, Pentecost, Catholic, Mormon, Adventist, Methodist, etc.
5. Are we dogmatic, arrogant, and narrow-minded when we teach what the apostles of Christ taught and as they taught it?
6. Most denominationalists are very positive about faith in Christ.
  - a. They admit no other way.
  - b. Are they being dogmatic? Narrow? Why not?
  - c. From the same source and by the same authority, we teach the whole Scheme of human redemption. Why condemn us?

**D. THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST TAUGHT OTHERS TO BE PLAIN, POSITIVE AND UNEQUIVOCAL.**

1. Paul’s charge to Timothy is an example, 2Tim.4:1-5.
  - a. This charge is both inclusive and exclusive. It includes all that the “word” includes. It excludes all that the “word” excludes, or omits.
  - b. The silence of the Scriptures must be respected. Cf. 1Pet.4:11.
  - c. This rules out mere book reviews, political speeches, creeds of men as a steady diet for the hearers.
  - d. It’s preach the gospel!
2. Peter is another example, 1Pet.4:11; 3:15.
3. Also, John, 2Jno.9-11.
4. This rules out the philosophy which says: “Here we agree to differ, but unite to serve.” (As displayed by the Methodist church in Rector, Ark.
  - a. There is always room to grow in knowledge, but no room to ignore error in the interest of unity!

**E. THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST WERE POSITIVE ABOUT GOD’S POWER TO SAVE.**

1. Rom.1:14-17; Ac.2:36-38; 1Cor.15:1-3; Ac.18:8.
2. Nothing else, no other message, will do; no substitute may be offered or accepted, Gal.1:6-12. Cf. Mk.16:15,16; Jno.12:48-50; Heb.5:8,9; Lk.6:46.
3. No think-sos; grave-yard stories; mourners-bench experiences were every taught by the apostles; there were no hand-shake-conversions in apostolic days – you can’t “shake them in!”
4. They were positive about who the saved are and where the saved are located, Ac.2:37-41,47.

**F. THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST WERE PLAIN, POSITIVE AND UN-EQUIVOCAL ABOUT THE IDENTIFY OF THE CHURCH BELONGING TO CHRIST, ITS WORSHIP AND ITS WORK.**

1. Were they too dogmatic?
2. Are we, when we teach and practice that which they taught and practiced?

**III. CONCLUSION**

1. When we believe, teach, and practice only what the Father, the Son, and the Spirit-guided apostles taught, commanded or authorized by example and or necessary implication, are we dogmatic, arrogant, narrow-minded, and opinionated?
  - a. If so, I plead for more dogmatism!
2. If you doubt that we teach as they did, I call upon you to prove it!
3. Are we dogmatic because “we speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent”? Because we insist on “calling Bible things by Bible names,” and “doing Bible things in Bible ways”?
  - a. If so I plead guilty! But I am in good company!
4. All men can afford to be just as narrow and positive as God’s word. In fact, we must be or be lost!
5. This may not appeal to the so-called spiritually “well-bred”; it didn’t in N.T. days (1Cor.1:26); but it pleases God.
6. Gal.1:6-10.