

## Spiritual Neutrality

When it comes to spirituality, some people are kind of like Switzerland- trying to be “neutral.” Switzerland’s neutrality has historically been more about money than anything else. In WWII, they simply wanted to be “on friendly terms” with, and therefore able “to do business” with, both sides. Most attempts at spiritual neutrality have the same motivation!

What is meant by “spiritual neutrality”? “Neutrality” is the effort to “sit on the fence” instead of picking a side in which to invest complete allegiance and devotion. “Spiritual neutrality,” at least as the term is being used here, is pretty much the same thing as it related to the great conflict of life between good and evil- God and Satan, cf. Ephesians 6:10-12. Although most people *want* to think of themselves, and be thought of, as being *on God’s side*, and few are boldly arrogant enough to openly declare themselves as allied with Satan and opposed to God, many wind up at least attempting to sit on the neutrality fence. How so?

Attempts at spiritual neutrality usually look something like this. We partition an hour or so of our busy schedules Sunday morning for God (at least once or twice a month), and show up “at His place” to sing (or at least listen to others do so), pray (or at least bow our heads and put on our best pious faces), and listen to a message from His word (or at least act like we’re paying attention). Then, when the final “Amen” is said, we hit the door eager to pursue “our” desires for the rest of the week. After all, we’ve “put God first,” right? “Putting God first” for an hour each week is not exactly what Jesus had in mind according to Matthew 6:33. But thinking and acting in this way is surely an attempt at spiritual neutrality.

Christianity, or being “on God/Christ’s side,” requires commitment- complete commitment. According to Jesus, it requires our whole *hearts*, our entire *souls*, our complete *minds*, and our total *strength*, Mark 12:30. Additionally, He says it requires that we “*love your neighbor as yourself*,” v.31. But, if we adopt a minimum input attitude, and thus give only enough of ourselves to “stay in the good graces” of some local church fellowship, we are attempting spiritual neutrality. We don’t want to be openly and completely allied with Satan, and yet neither are we willing to be completely committed to Christ. We want just enough of Christ to keep us from hell, but just enough of self, Satan, and sin to keep us from being ostracized by the world (you know, just enough to still have “fun”). So, we try to maintain a sort of “dual citizenship” with God and the world that allows us to do “business” with both sides.

However, there is a huge problem with this notion and intent. Jesus said that spiritual neutrality is impossible, “*He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters*,” Matthew 12:30. In the great conflict between good and evil there is no “middle ground,” and no “fence” between to straddle. You’re either in “*the kingdom of His beloved Son*,” or “*the domain of darkness*,” Colossians 1:13; you’re either “*of God*,” or part of “*the world (that) lies in the power of the evil one*,” 1John 5:19. It’s one or the other, and 1John 3:10 says the distinction is clear, “*By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious; anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother*.”

Spiritual neutrality just is not an option. And those attempting it wind up making themselves the enemy of God. “*You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God*,” James 4:4! But it doesn’t have to be this way. You can be wholly committed to God, and completely opposed to Satan. After all, we know which side “wins” in the end, Revelation 20:10.

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