

CALLING THE NAMES OF FALSE TEACHERS

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There is a strong consensus of opinion among some in the brotherhood today that you should never call names when it comes to identifying one who is a proponent of false doctrine. It is viewed as an act of hostility if you name a brother who is publicly espousing a Scripturally untenable position. It has been a practice of mine, as long as I have been preaching, to call attention to what some brethren are saying on certain issues, and to mention their names in connection with it, if necessary.

In those areas wherein some brethren are propagating false and dangerous notions, it is always necessary to mention their names in connection with them. If a brother has written a divisive book or made heretical statements publicly, then we should not hesitate to let people know what is being said and who is saying it. It would be less than honest to do otherwise.

To simply say that “some brethren” suggest thus and so is not enough to warn others of what is being taught and who is teaching it. If there is an issue troubling the brotherhood of Christ and there is a brother out there promoting it, then, we need to know who it is that is saying it is so that we can heed the New Testament injunction to “MARK THEM WHICH CAUSE DIVISIONS AND OFFENCES CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINE WHICH YE HAVE LEARNED; AND AVOID THEM” (**Romans 16:17**). You cannot mark a phantom and avoid an unknown. Thus, you cannot obey God by treating the false teacher with nameless courtesy. The obligation that we have to mark and avoid the false teacher is greater than his self-perceived “right” to say and publish anything he wants to, no matter how twisted, and expect no one to raise an eyebrow or say anything by way of criticism.

It is not vindictive pride that prompts me to suggest to you that calling the names of false teachers, whether in or out of the church of our Lord, is right and proper. The precedent for such a straightforward approach has been set by Jesus and His inspired apostles. Jesus said, “BEWARE YE OF THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES, WHICH IS HYPOCRISY” (**Luke 12:1**). In that brief statement, He identified both the problem to be avoided and the ones responsible for promoting it, thus, violating liberal “etiquette” on both counts. Again, Paul wrote of a doctrinal concern of his day, saying:

“AND THEIR WORD WILL EAT AS DOTH A CANKER: OF WHOM IS HYMENAEOUS AND PHILETUS; WHO CONCERNING THE TRUTH HAVE ERRED, SAYING THAT THE RESURRECTION IS PAST ALREADY; AND OVERTHROW THE FAITH OF SOME” (**2 Timothy 2:17-18**).

Let the brother who thinks that calling names is wrong tell wherein Paul erred in the above statement. If he cannot be so bold, then, let him tell wherein we err if we do as Paul did. It is right and proper to call the names of those teaching falsely in order that others might know. One day Another will call their names, and they will answer. We pray for their repentance before that time,