

The Place of Sincerity in Religion—No. 1

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There are three positions taken on this subject:

1. Some people believe sincerity is all important as indicated by the familiar statement, “It makes no difference what you believe as long as you’re sincere.”
2. Others believe sincerity to be unessential, as evidenced by their failure to practice what they preach.
3. Still others hold to the view that sincerity in religion is essential, but that God requires more than sincerity alone.

What does the Bible say about the place of sincerity in God’s plan?

We must understand from the beginning that insincerity, hypocrisy is abominable to God. Hypocrisy literally means to put on a mask and pretend to be something one is not. Jesus openly condemned those who practice their religion merely to be seen and praised by men and He said that’s all they would receive (Mat. 6:1–18). Jesus harshly rebuked those who don’t practice what they preach and who put on a great outward display of piety, but are inwardly corrupt, calling them a bunch of snakes (Mat. 23:4–5, 25–28, 33). The hypocrites are doomed to eternal destruction in hell (Mat. 24:51).

Paul warned Timothy about the “hypocrisies of men that speak lies” (1 Tim. 4:1–2). Peter counseled: “Putting away therefore all wickedness, and guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings” (1 Pet. 2:1). John pleaded: “My little children let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and Truth” (1 John 3:18).

The same message is taught in many other places in God’s Word. None who believe the Bible can dispute the necessity of one’s being sincere in convictions, beliefs, and behavior if one wishes to please God. Lack of sincerity is intolerable to God. There is none more harmful to the cause of Truth and righteousness than the person who professes on Sunday what he is unwilling to practice Monday through Saturday.

Unfortunately, many have jumped to the conclusion that since sincerity is so important to God, it is therefore **all** that is important to God. We shall study this erroneous concept in subsequent Brief Articles.

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