

Hypocrisy

“Jesus told them, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites in Scripture: ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is pointless, because **their teachings are rules made by humans.**’” **“You abandon the commandments of God to follow human traditions. ... Because of your traditions you have destroyed the authority of God’s word. And you do many other things like that.”** (Mark 7:6-8+13, God’s Word Translation, emphasis mine)

This is heavy stuff.

Recently I attended a conference at a Technical University in western Germany where Christians of all creeds and from all occupations met to discuss a biblical money system as an alternative to the world’s destructive interest based monetary system. I can’t deny the good intentions of the organizers to make something like that happen. But I was shocked by many statements coming from the mouth of those who attended, i.e. seasoned bankers, “high ranking officials” of national churches and aid agencies, theologians, pastors, teachers, business people, etc., who all claim to be followers of Christ.

Although the organizers had intended to discuss the practical steps and implications of introducing an interest free money in the church context, most attendees were adamant that leaving the world’s man-made financial system is a non issue and that interest is a vital, non-negotiable part of how we have to operate in the financial arena. My attempts to exhort us all as believers to found everything we plan and do on the Word of God rather than on man’s ways, wisdom and textbook teaching fell mostly on deaf ears. Some even attacked me for my insistence to use the Bible as reference for our mode of conduct and operation, even in the financial realm.

Here are just a couple of the many expressed opposing standpoints to base our financial operations on biblical principles:

- The head of the finance department of the Evangelical Church of Germany considers the forgoing of interest on the part of the church as unfeasible! Thats amazing! To put his statement more bluntly: The church can’t afford to act on biblical standards as stated in Exodus 22:25, Leviticus 25:36-37, Deuteronomy 23:19, Proverbs 22:8 and Luke 6:35!
- The representative of Oikocredit, a cooperative credit association providing micro finance to the poor in 70 nations around the globe, defended their 7-11% of credit interest by stating that without interest, Oikocredit would not be able to operate on international financial markets! Wow! Considering that this cooperative targets believers on both sides (lenders and borrowers), such a statement is another brazen disregard for God’s Word and principles!

Doesn’t this all sound ridiculous? Frankly, this frustrating experience is not as unusual or a once-off as critics might want make it out to be. Its common, all over the world. And, sadly, its no different to what Jesus was confronted with - people professing to be believers, yet abandoning the Word of God in favor of human ways and traditions!

I know I’m repeating myself, but what makes us believe that we, God’s created beings, are smarter than our Creator Himself? Don’t such attitudes condemn us as hypocrites, too, nullifying the authority of God’s Word?

Witnessing the current downfall of what man created in disobedience to God (world finance system), isn’t it time for a change for us believers to leave our hypocritical path of giving an ungodly man-made system preference over God’s principles?