

# MADRID CHURCH OF CHRIST

SUNDAY, AUGUST 06, 2017



**"PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL" (EPHESIANS 6:11).**

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## OVERREACTING TO FALSE DOCTRINE

May it be the case that we are at times guilty of overreacting to false doctrines? To “overreact” means to react excessively or inappropriately. Yes, of course, we need to beware of, respond to, and rebuke false doctrines, but we need to make sure our response is appropriate and biblical. Because all too often we overreact to false doctrines by swinging to an opposite extreme.

### A Historical Perspective

Many of the false doctrines that exist today, in some way, began as an overreaction to other false doctrines. Here are some examples:

- The Catholic doctrine of **apostolic succession** seems to have begun as an overreaction to heretics like the Gnostics. The Catholic argument may have sounded something like this,

“Don’t listen to those false teachers, listen to the men who were trained by the apostles, they couldn’t possibly be wrong.” Instead of appealing to Scripture, they panicked and appealed to the reliability of church leadership.

- The Protestant idea that **baptism** has nothing to do with salvation may very well have been an overreaction to the ritualism of the Catholic church. The Protestants were right that water sprinkled on a baby’s head has nothing to do with salvation, because a baby lacks faith in Christ; but they were wrong to go so far as to say *water* has nothing to do with salvation (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).

We could go on and on, but the point is that when we see a theological error, we tend to swing to an opposite extreme and wind up holding an erroneous position ourselves.

### **Opposite is Not the Goal**

Just because someone is wrong, doesn’t mean the opposite extreme is right. I’ve seen my brethren – even close friends – take wrong positions because they overreacted to false doctrine. And sadly, I’m quite certain I’ve been guilty of this myself.

- Just because some people misunderstand **grace**, thinking it means you don’t need to respond to the gospel in obedient faith, does NOT mean we need to take a position that waters down, minimizes, or dismisses grace.
- Just because some people allow their **worship** to be dictated by their emotions, does NOT mean we need to take a position *against* heart-felt worship or crush any signs of emotion during the worship assembly.
- Just because some people falsely teach that you can be a practicing **homosexual** and a Christian, does NOT mean we need to take a position that is hateful toward homosexuals.
- Just because many Pentecostal groups misrepresent the **Holy Spirit’s work** in the world today does not mean that we

should overreact by saying that the Holy Spirit is not active in the world today.

- Just because Calvinists believe that God **predestines** or predetermines individuals to be saved or lost does not mean that the Bible does not teach any kind of predestination.

Once again, we can go on and on giving examples. We see in these examples that taking the extreme opposite position of those who teach falsely on grace, worship, sexuality, or any other issue is not the goal of faithful Christians; but it is certainly easy to fall into this trap. When we get emotional towards something we believe is false, our temptation is to try to hold an opposing view that is as different as we can be from the view we do not like. We need to keep this tendency in our minds to guard ourselves from overreacting.

### **Moderate is Not the Goal**

But then again, when this discussion comes up, someone usually quotes the cliché, “The truth is always somewhere in the middle.” But **that’s NOT necessarily true either.** In reality, the position that truth is “always somewhere in the middle” is actually an overreaction to those who go to extremes.

Just because some people overreact and go to the opposite extremes, does NOT mean we should overreact to that and always take a moderate position.

God does not call us to be “moderate in all things.” He calls us to be a people who are radically committed to His glory. Which means there will be times when we take positions that are extremely different from those around us. So if you always take the middle ground, there will be times when your position is extremely wrong.

### **Biblical is the Goal**

So how can we determine the right position? How can we determine the appropriate reaction to false teaching? How can we know where to stand?

Our goal should NOT be to take an opposite OR moderate position, but to **take a biblical position on everything**. Sometimes that will look like we're "joining the crowd," sometimes it will be the extreme opposite of the position everyone else seems to be taking, and sometimes it will be somewhere in the middle.

The way to determine the biblical position is NOT by making adjustments in relation to others, but in simply examining God's word and taking a position in relation to God. Our *ultimate* goal is not to separate and distinguish ourselves from all the heretics. Our goal is to join ourselves with God and invite others to join us as well.

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### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- 09/03 – Song/Prayer Service
- 09/02-09/04 – Labor Day Weekend Outreach
- 09/10-09/13 – Gospel Meeting w/ Matthew Allen
- 10/29 – Next Invite Sunday – *The Best Possible News: Jesus Will Return*

Brethren, please be prayerful about our upcoming opportunities to serve and reach out to the lost in our community, and be thinking about what you can do during Labor Day weekend to serve.

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### **DAILY READING:**

- **08/07** – 1 Chron1-10 [Skim]; Psalm 65
- **08/08** – 1 Chron 11-14; Psalm 66
- **08/09** – 1 Chron 15-17; Psalm 67
- **08/10** – 1 Chron 18-21; Psalm 68
- **08/11** – 1 Chron 22-24; Psalm 69
- **08/12** – 1 Chron 25-29; Psalm 70
- **08/13** – 2 Chron 1-4; Psalm 71



*Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*

- Psalm 119:105