



## **Are You Seeking the Favor of God or Men?** **By Dr. Larry Ollison**

*"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."* (1 Corinthians 11:1)

Every generation has its subculture. A few weeks ago I was looking through some old photographs from the turn of the century that were taken at a presidential gathering. The men were dressed in suits and the ladies in dresses. Although they had on their very best to impress the leaders of our government and each other, they looked relatively normal.

Outside of the building there was a protest going on by what I call a subculture group. These people were wearing the "in" styles of the day. The men were wearing slacks with bands below their knees, long chains, wide lapels, strange hairdos and hats. The women were equally as bizarre. I'm sure they thought they were in the new wave of society. However, that style only lasted for three or four years and then a new subculture style came along.

Today is no different. But there is a trend that I find rather disturbing. Many churches, in order to be relevant, are catering to and trying to attract the temporary subcultures of our day. There is a great danger in this. Subcultures are subject to the current political thinking, superstar dress code, and are influenced by a type of popularity hero worship. If the most popular contemporary person of our day started dressing in a bizarre manner, it would only be a matter of days before that form of dress would be sold in the department stores. But likewise, in time, it would fade away.

God's Word never changes. God does not change. Jesus does not change and the Holy Spirit does not change. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are for the same purpose now that they were in the first century. In an attempt to be relevant to man, some Christians have crossed the line. In the quest to become relevant, many have fallen into political correctness. We must become relevant to God and then we will be automatically relevant to man.

The power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which produce the miracle power of God, will change lives and set people free. Of course, we must be sensitive to the needs of people. Of course, we must be relevant to our community. Yes, we must present ourselves in a way that does not make the world feel condemned. However, we cannot do this at the expense of excluding the Holy Spirit from our services and looking like the world.

Years ago at a ministers' conference, the statement was made that shepherds (pastors) should smell like their sheep. But sometimes, I've noticed, that some pastors wallow in the sheep pen so much that instead of smelling like sheep, they smell like sheep dung.

Here's what I think. Instead of pastors gathering all the problems of the people and taking their problems to God and saying, "God, here are my people's problems," pastors should instead go and spend time with the Father and meditate on His Word and take His Word to the people. Again, rather than solely representing the people to God, we must represent God to the people. When people get around me, I want to smell like the Father!

Water flowing from the peak of the mountain is always pure. James 1:17 tells us that the perfect gifts come from above. The Father and His Word are consistent and do not change through all generations. People, customs, and cultures change, but salvation, faith, and grace do not. We should never change the Word in order to please people. In the early years of the church, Paul asked this question, "Am I seeking the favor of men or of God?" (Galatians 1:10) And that is my question to the church today. Are we seeking the favor of God or the favor of men?

### **Scripture Reference**

*"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."* (Matthew 6:33)

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