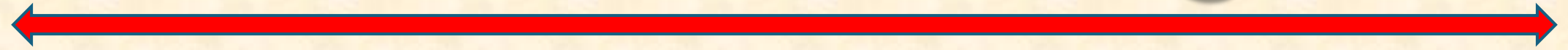


# Controversy:



*Past, Present & Future*

# Controversy

- The battle between truth and error is as old as man (Gen. 3) and will continue as long as the world stands.

“I’ve never tried to be controversial. The truth is controversial enough.”

- Keith Green

“If it matters, it produces controversy.”

- Jay Green

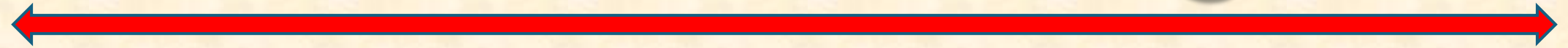
# Controversy

- The battle between truth and error is as old as man (Gen. 3) and will continue as long as the world stands.
- Such a conflict forces us to contend for the faith (Jude 3).
- Some things about controversy remain constant – thus, controversy today is no different than 25, 50 or 100 years ago.
- There are some things that do change – each generation faces new challenges.

# Today's Controversy

- ❑ Social media makes the spread of error / influence of false teacher somewhat easier
  - ✓ *There's no one to edit & refuse to print*
  - ✓ *There's no one to make sure that a balanced response is published along side of the error*
  - ✓ *There's no one to call and end to the discussion*
- ❑ Post / Blogs / Podcast makes it possible for a brother 2,000 miles away to have as much influence as one across town

# Controversy:



*Past, Present & Future*

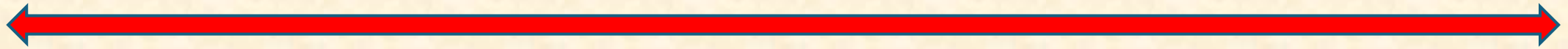


# Controversy:

## *Past, Present & Future*

- What principles should guide us when error is obvious?
- Biblical principles do not change.
- Circumstances / situations wherein we apply those principles will change.

# **Controversy:** *Past, Present & Future*



**I. Responsibility to the Lord**

**II. Responsibility to the Brethren**

**III. Responsibility to the Teacher of Error**

# Controversy:

## *Past, Present & Future*



**I. Responsibility to the Lord**

II. Responsibility to the Brethren

III. Responsibility to the Teacher of Error



# I. Responsibility to the Lord

## A. Preach the word

1. *1 Pet. 4:11 – speak as oracles of God*
2. *2 Tim. 4:1-2 – preach the word (cf. context of chapter 3)*
3. *1 Kings 22:14 – speak what the Lord says*
4. *“If you can’t prove it by the text, you can’t preach it by faith!”*

# I. Responsibility to the Lord

**A. Preach the word**

**B. Contend against error**

1. *Jude 3 – contend earnestly for the faith*
2. *Much of the NT is a contention against error*

# ***Much of the NT is a contention against error***



- a. **Gospels** – Jesus contends with the erroneous Jews
- b. **Romans** – Paul contends against Judaism
- c. **1 Corinthians** – Paul contends against false teaching on resurrection
- d. **2 Corinthians** – Paul contends against those who deny his apostleship
- e. **Galatians** – Paul contends against Judaism
- f. **Colossians** – Paul contends against the Colossian heresy
- g. **2 Thessalonians** – Paul contends against error on second coming
- h. **Hebrews** – Paul contends against Judaism
- i. **2 Peter** - Peter contends against error on second coming
- j. **1 John** – John contends against Gnostic thought

# I. Responsibility to the Lord

**A. Preach the word**

**B. Contend against error**

**C. Set for the defense of the gospel**

1. *Phil. 1:17*
2. *Since error is a perversion of the truth, the contrast must be shown (1 John 4:1, 6)*
3. *Truth must be defended by denouncing error – so truth will prevail.*

# Some Observations About Our Responsibility to the Lord

- ❑ Possible to teach the truth on a subject (i.e. baptism, second coming, MDR) and refute error without directly addressing the error or the one who advocates it.
- ❑ Our allegiance to the Lord outweighs any allegiance to a friend, brother, or eldership!
- ❑ Error must be exposed regardless of who teaches it (cf. 1 Tim. 5:19-20)



# Controversy:

## *Past, Present & Future*



I. Responsibility to the Lord

**II. Responsibility to the Brethren**

III. Responsibility to the Teacher of Error

## II. Responsibility to the Brethren

### A. Prevent the advance of error by teaching the text in context

#### 1. *2 Peter 3:16-18*

- a. Some pervert the Scripture (take text out of context) – (v. 16)
- b. Danger that one can be lead away with error (v. 17)
- c. Answer: grow in knowledge (learn the text in context) – (v. 18)

#### 2. *Herein is the value of textual studies*

## II. Responsibility to the Brethren

**A. Prevent the advance of error by teaching the text in context**

**B. Warn of error**

1. *1 Cor. 15:33 –*
2. *Gal 1:8-9 –*
3. *Elders are to watch for souls – thus, see that brethren are warned*
  1. *Heb. 13:7, 17*
  2. *Titus 1 – elders are appointed to guard and protect sound faith*

## II. Responsibility to the Brethren

**A. Prevent the advance of error by teaching the text in context**

**B. Warn of error**

**C. Mark and identify teachers of error**

1. *Rom. 16:17-18*
2. *Identify both the doctrine and the advocates*
3. *Danger of leaven corrupting the whole lump (Gal. 5:9; 1 Cor. 5:6)*
4. *Must not hold our peace when lives are at stake (cf. Esther 4:14)*



# ***What About Identifying By Name The Teacher of Error?***

## **1. The NT sets a precedent for calling names**

- a. 1 Tim. 1:19-20 – Hymenaeus & Alexander
- b. 2 Tim. 2:17-18 – Hymenaeus & Philetus
- c. 2 Tim. 4:14-15 – Alexander the coppersmith
- d. 3 Jno. 9 - Diotrephes





# ***What About Identifying By Name The Teacher of Error?***

**1. The NT sets a precedent for calling names**

**2. Why call names at all?**

- a. Every false doctrine has a person advocating it!
- b. Shows the false teaching is real (attaches a person or group to the doctrine)
- c. When we don't – some may think it is a minor problem
- d. Shows how widespread and influential a doctrine is
- e. Warns of a particular teacher – to offset his influence
  - 1) Lest he deceive others with smooth speech (Rom. 16:18)
  - 2) Some will agree that a certain error is wrong – but may not realize that \_\_\_\_\_ teaches that



# ***What About Identifying By Name The Teacher of Error?***

- 1. The NT sets a precedent for calling names**
- 2. Why call names at all?**
- 3. Criteria for when I call names and when I don't**
  - a. Does calling the name of a teacher distract from the study of the issue?
  - b. What influence does the person have on your audience?
    - 1) Well-known?
    - 2) Holding meetings in the area?
    - 3) Social media / podcast / video presence online?
  - c. Is it necessary to show that the issue / doctrine is a real problem?



## ***What About Identifying By Name The Teacher of Error?***

- 1. The NT sets a precedent for calling names**
- 2. Why call names at all?**
- 3. Criteria for when I call names and when I don't**
- 4. Objections:**
  - a. "This is just a personal matter between some preachers"
  - b. "Attacking the person"
  - c. "He is trying to make a name for himself"

# On Calling Names

Foy E. Wallace, Jr



Calling names of false teachers and their aids, and sympathizers is neither undignified nor discourteous, because Paul did it and he was courteous, dignified and educated. He said:

"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." It was hard on Demas for Paul to say that publicly. He should have taken that up with Demas privately! Again, he said that Hymenaeus and Philetus had shipwrecked their faith and were overthrowing the faith of others by their theory of the resurrection and he wrote it down in the New Testament (a rather dignified book) that he had turned those brethren of his over to Satan. He clashed with Barnabas upon one occasion and withstood Peter to his face and rebuked him publicly. Neither incident ruined the church, nor marred the dignity of the New Testament. He further said that Alexander the coppersmith did him much evil and declared that the Lord would reward him for what he did. Paul did not seem to covet the kind of reward he intimated Alexander would get. He told a perverter of the truth one time that he was full of guile and villainy called him a son of the devil and asked him to quit perverting the way of the Lord. When a paper develops better manners than the New Testament and a preacher becomes more dignified than the apostles, neither is worth anything to the defense of the truth nor to the cause of Christ.

Truth Magazine, XVI: 5, p. 10, December 2, 1971



# Controversy: *Past, Present & Future*



I. Responsibility to the Lord

II. Responsibility to the Brethren

**III. Responsibility to the Teacher of Error**



# III. Responsibility to the Teacher of Error

## A. Appeal to study – so he will correct the error

1. *2 Thess. 3:15 – admonish him as a brother.*
2. *Acts 18:24-28 – Aquila & Priscilla kindly taught and corrected Apollos.*
3. *Not everyone will have the opportunity for such a study.*

# III. Responsibility to the Teacher of Error

**A. Appeal to study – so he will correct the error**

**B. When the teaching is public – response should be public**

1. *Absurdity of public teaching being privately corrected (cf. Acts 16:37)*
2. *Peter's public action was dealt with publicly (Gal. 2:11-14)*
3. *What about Matthew 18 – shouldn't one go to false teacher first?*

# Matthew 18:15-17

## *How the passage is abused*

- Error is taught publicly (sermon, social media, blog, article, etc.)
- Some brother publicly responds
- Some brethren will cry, “Should have gone to him first”

# Matthew 18:15-17

*Applies to Private Sin – Not Public Sin or Error*

## 1. **Sin is private – not public**

- *“Against you” (v. 15)*
- *Private interview says the sin was private*
- *Peter asks about “against me” (v.21)*

# Matthew 18:15-17

*Applies to Private Sin – Not Public Sin or Error*

1. **Sin is private – not public**
2. **Nothing wrong with going to teacher of error BEFORE public refutation**
  - *I've done that before in some cases*
  - *Not demanded by this text or any other!*



# Matthew 18:15-17

*Applies to Private Sin – Not Public Sin or Error*

1. **Sin is private – not public**
2. **Nothing wrong with going to teacher of error BEFORE public refutation**
3. **Public sin / error was publicly refuted**
  - *Gal. 2:11-14 – “before them all”*
  - *1 Tim. 5:20 – elders sinning rebuke in presence of all*
  - *1 Tim. 1:20 – public mention of names and damage done*
  - *2 Tim. 2:17 – public mention of names and error*
  - *Rom. 16:17-18 – mark those who cause division*
  - *1 Cor. 1:11-12 – Chloe told Paul problems at Corinth*
  - *1 Corinthian letter address publicly numerous problems*

# Matthew 18:15-17

*Applies to Private Sin – Not Public Sin or Error*

1. **Sin is private – not public**
2. **Nothing wrong with going to teacher of error BEFORE public refutation**
3. **Public sin / error was publicly refuted**
4. **Inconsistency:**
  - *Those who abuse this text – don't follow their own rule!*
  - *Their inconsistency shows that real problem is not going to person first – but the fact the error is being refuted!*

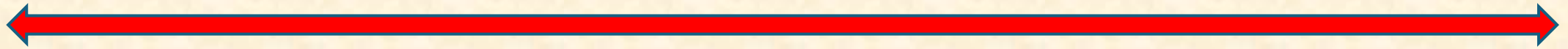
# III. Responsibility to the Teacher of Error

- A. Appeal to study – so he will correct the error**
- B. When the teaching is public – response should be public**
- C. Represent the person properly, fairly and correctly**
  - 1. *Treat him the way you would want to be treated (Matt. 7:12)*
  - 2. *Document the false position – give evidence*

# III. Responsibility to the Teacher of Error

- A. Appeal to study – so he will correct the error**
- B. When the teaching is public – response should be public**
- C. Represent the person properly, fairly and correctly**
- D. Treat the person with honor and respect**
  - 1. *Treat him the way you would want to be treated (Matt. 7:12)*
  - 2. *Any other treatment will do more harm than good!*

# **Controversy:** *Past, Present & Future*



**I. Responsibility to the Lord**

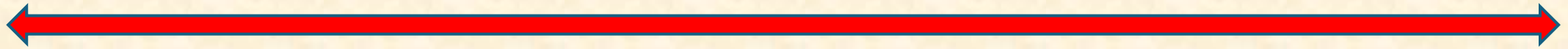
**II. Responsibility to the Brethren**

**III. Responsibility to the Teacher of Error**



# Controversy:

## *Past, Present & Future*



- Let us always demand that truth be taught.
- Let us always want error to be refuted.
- May we never become so “dignified or courteous” that we have no toleration for identifying teachers of error!