Are You a Part of ...? Are You Aligned with ...?

With Whom Do You Stand?

We get questions like those, now and then, from readers who want to know if we are aligned with this group or that group. Some want us “to be” a part of a particular group, while others are fearful lest we “are” a part of a particular group. So, for your peace of mind, let’s talk about it. With whom do we stand?

We believe there are groups that are seeking to serve God, and we do not doubt that God has His servants in various groups. However, as we prayed about our business before its launch, it became clear that God was leading us not to be a part of any group. We knew we could glean from various men and women of God, but when it came to close association, we could look only to God and His Word, the Bible.

We stand on the Word of God.

We believe this is where Christians should stand. We believe we should look up to no man or woman in place of looking up to God. When we have occasion to listen to others address the matter of character, we always submit our findings to the absolutes of God’s Word. Although we may say we learn certain things from Group A or Group B, or we have been influenced by this or that about Group A or B, we choose not to say that we are associated with any given group, because every group is fallible. We might be standing for things you know about the group that we do not know.

We Align Ourselves with an Infallible God.
When all is said and done, we think this is where Christians want us to align our business. We know it is where God wants it to be aligned. One organization that is aligned with another organization is brought into a straight line with that other. They become parallel to one another. They side with and support one another. If you drop a plumb line along one organization, the other organization will be perfectly parallel to that plumb line. Wherein it is not, it will change for the sake of being lined up with both the line and the first organization.

This we cannot do. While we may be able to support or side with another organization on some points, we cannot promise to be in total agreement with any group. We cannot look at this or that group, no matter how solid they appear to be, and take their work and word as our plumb line. The only safe and sure plumb line we can have is that of God’s Word, and in that Word, God instructs us:

“*You shall have no other gods before Me.*”

*Exodus 20:3*

God is ruling out other plumb lines. He is telling us that when we want direction, we must look to Him, and to the Word He has given us. We are to align ourselves with the principles in God’s Word.

By choosing to do this, we are not saying, nor do we think, that we are better than any other group. We are simply saying that instead of looking for direction to a man or woman who is as fallible as we are, we should look unto Jesus.

Now let me ask you a question.

**With Whom Are You Aligned?**

There are those who find a particular group and claim it as their touchstone. If they choose Group A, they find themselves asking frequently, “What does Group A say about this?” They take the answer to that question as guidance, without checking it against God’s Word. They trust Group A implicitly. They believe Group A is absolutely right in everything; that it will always tell them exactly what God wants. There are those who are emotionally attached to some great Christian leader who has helped them, and they will only listen to him. They read only his books or listen only to his tapes. They say, “I am of Gothard” – or “I am of Bright” – or “I am of Graham.” They sound like the Corinthians whom Paul rebuked in I Corinthians 1.

**Some people accept principles based solely on who believes them.**

They exercise neither diligence nor discernment. Too lazy to search the Scriptures and be sure of what is being taught, they simply open their mouths like baby birds, and take whatever their chosen group offers. There may be error mixed with the truth, since no group is infallible, but they are unwilling to accept that possibility. “If Group A teaches it, it must be true.” “You must align yourself with Mr. A if you want me to listen to you.”

**Some people reject principles based solely on who believes them.**

A number of years ago, my father pastored a church in Provo, Utah. As you probably know, that beautiful little town is the home of a famous Mormon university. Dad’s congregation was very aware of this, and was aware, too, of Mormon beliefs.
On a certain Sunday, therefore, when Dad preached about Heaven, he heard some bleating from his flock. Dad had rested his sermon squarely on God’s Word, and knew that what he was teaching was solid truth.

At the end of the service, though, as Dad waited to greet parishioners in the foyer, he got a surprise. Two women stepped forward and upbraided Dad for what he had taught. “We can’t believe that,” they said. “The Mormons believe that!”

**The Mormons Believe That!**

Those women had neatly packaged all beliefs and assigned them to various groups. They accepted things from their chosen group, and rejected things from other groups. If conflict arose, the sole determining factor was not whether it was truth, but whether the Mormons believed it. They judged truth by the mouth that spoke. These women, and some of our readers, forget what Acts 17:11 says:

> These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

They did not decide the rightness of what they heard based on the lips that spoke it. Rather, they searched the scriptures to see if what they heard was truth.

This is what we urge our readers to do regarding information we present. We urge you to do it with information from other groups, too.

Exercise the character trait, diligence, and judge all materials and practices based on whether it fits the Word of God.

**Some people accept what they think might be their group’s principles.**

Let me end with this example drawn from correspondence with a teacher who signed up for our complimentary course. I have changed names to protect the identity of both the teacher and the group concerned.

Shortly after enrolling, Mrs. Sherman wrote, “Are you associated with Character Concord?”

I responded, assuring Mrs. Sherman that, while I had benefited in the past from materials put out by Character Concord, and had used some of their materials while teaching school, we were not associated with the group.

Mrs. Sherman did not answer, and we heard nothing more until we announced our interactive character stories for children. Immediately upon receipt of that announcement, she wrote as though she had not asked before, “Are you with Character Concord? This doesn’t sound like something they would do.”

My reply to Mrs. Sherman was along the lines of the article you are reading. I offered Scripture verses on which we based our decision to offer such stories, and gave her our understanding of those verses. I closed by asking her to pray about the matter and let me know her thoughts.

Within an hour, Mrs. Sherman wrote back. “I must admit I haven't thought too much about the subject - it just came to my mind that Character Concord probably does not
promote being on the computer … haven't really prayed about it … I would appreciate being taken off your mailing list … but I do believe you teach good things.”

I have never met Mrs. Sherman, but she has told me a lot about herself in a brief email. Look at her answer.

- She did not think much about this.
- Her group **probably** did not promote this.
- She had not prayed about it.
- She believes we teach good things.
- But she wants to be taken off of our list.

There are those who accept what they think **might be** unspoken principles that their chosen group believes. Without exercising diligence to think and pray about the matter, they are willing to reject good things that **might** conflict with what their group believes and promotes.

**With Whom Do We Stand?**

Now you understand with whom we at Character-in-Action® stand, and why we stand as we do. We are willing to learn from the material put out by other organizations. We are willing to associate with people of other organizations. We are not, however, willing to align ourselves with any but the infallible God of Heaven.

**Wherever the Hand of God Leads, We Will Follow.**