

Situational Christianity

Pastor Anthony J Shetley

Recently, a gentleman was telling me about a philosophy class which he had taken while in college called “situational ethics.”

Situational ethics is defined as “the doctrine of flexibility in the application of moral laws according to circumstances.” In other words, the right thing to do is determined by relevancy and not by moral absolutes.

After he described situational ethics to me, I immediately thought, “Wow, does this not describe many professing Christians today, of which you could say, they practice situational Christianity?”

Situational Christianity is the doctrine of flexibility in the application of righteous behavior according to circumstances. In other words, the right thing to do is based upon relevancy and not the absolute truth of the bible.

Now, the ideal way to rationalize such a precept involves the detachment of one’s actions from having any bearing upon their relationship with God.

This rationale is used by many to define the amazing grace of God. These claim that our capacity to sin without affecting our relationship with God actually brings glory to God’s grace.

This erroneous thinking was addressed in the early church by the apostle named Paul.

Romans 6:1–2

¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

²May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

God is not a situational God.

God is always the same. The God of the Old Testament is the same God in the New Testament. God’s attitude toward sin has not changed, and the wages of sin is still death. So, what has changed from the old to the new? The answer is Jesus, Christ!

Law and Grace

Until Christ, there was the law. The Law revealed God’s righteousness, however, it depended upon sinful flesh to keep it.

But what the law couldn’t do, God did by sending His Son, Jesus Christ. Because of what He has done, we are no longer under the law of sin and death, but we have come under the law of the Spirit of life!

We are under the new covenant whereby we have been set free from sin and its power over us, and our obedience relies upon the power of God’s Spirit within us and not upon our flesh alone. We yield ourselves to the Spirit and not the flesh. (Romans 8)

As a follower of Christ, we are led by the Spirit of Christ. Acting by His word in every circumstance keeps us from falling prey to the many snares of Satan. (*We are free indeed!*)

The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. and o’ the power we have through His grace and by His truth! It is this power that Situational Christianity refutes.

A Hybrid Faith:

Situational Christianity seeks to live a hybrid faith. One that professes Jesus while it follows the world.

(Read 2 Kings 17:24-29: 32-33)
The transfer of foreign exiles to the land of Israel.

2 Kings 17:33

They feared the Lord and served their own gods according to the custom of the nations from among whom they had been carried away into exile.

These Gentiles feared the Lord, but they loved their idols.

God is a Jealous God!

James 4:4 (NIV)

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

God who created us and put His Spirit within us, desires our whole heart and devotion. No man can get along with his wife's boyfriend nor can any wife get along with her husbands' girlfriend.

Proverbs 6:34–35 (NIV)

³⁴*For jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge.*
³⁵*He will not accept any compensation; he will refuse a bribe; however great it is.*

There is no greater betrayal than adultery and there is no greater betrayal of God than to give the love which belongs to Him to the world!

Matthew Henry writes,

He who sets his heart upon the world, who places his happiness in it, and will conform himself to it, and will do anything rather than lose its friendship, he is an enemy to God; it is constructive treason and rebellion against God to set the world upon his (God's) throne in our hearts.

2 Timothy 3:2–5 (NIV) People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— having a form of godliness but denying its power.

All or Nothing

My friend, there is no hybrid faith that brings God together with the world. God will not share His throne with another. God will not share your heart or devotion to another. God requires all or nothing.

You can't possess a home in Heaven while you're "shacking up" with the world.

God's love is abundant. God is faithfully devoted to His people. A half-hearted relationship will not suffice. God gives all, God desires all!

You can devote yourself to this world, but it will never devote itself to you, nor will this world ever return your love. Jesus said that the world loves its own – the one which it can control.

God's message to Israel was repentance. Return to God from your adulterous relationship with the world. Forsake the world. Be reconciled to God - Renew your devotion to Him.