

Casual Attitudes - cont.

derstand (Jude 8–13).

Being Obnoxiously Petty: Many have a casual attitude toward others during the assembly. Disciples at Corinth corrupted the Lord's supper, changing it from a spiritual memorial to a common meal, one in which they showed penurious partiality: "Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk" (1 Cor. 11:17–22). The Corinthians also evidenced jealousy, strife and a party spirit (1 Cor. 3:1–9). However, such conduct is incompatible with the self-sacrificial spirit of heavenly wisdom (Jas. 3:13–18).

Being Defiantly Disobedient: Many have a casual attitude toward the divine pattern that governs the assembly. Offering strange fire to the Lord, Nadab and Abihu did not distinguish between the holy and the profane, and as a result, forfeited their lives (Lev. 10:1–11). In like manner, Uzziah the king disregarded the divine restrictions on priestly service, incurring the rebuke of Azariah and the wrath of God; as a result, he was cursed with leprosy (2 Chron. 26:16–23). Refusing to go beyond what is written, let us abide in the doctrine of Christ, and thus respect the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18–20; 2 John 8–11).

Many take a casual approach to God, evidencing indifference to their spiritual

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obligations. Are you inexcusably absent from the assembly of the saints, or perpetually late to periods of Bible study and worship? When you attend, are you appropriately or inappropriately dressed? What about your attitude and actions? Are you offensively irreverent, obnoxiously petty, or defiantly disobedient? If so, make correction while there is time and opportunity. God's warning to Aaron remains relevant today: "It is what the Lord spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored'" (Lev. 10:3). - *Mark Mayberry*

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Casual Attitudes of Worship (Guest Article)

Jesus often referred to wedding feasts or marriage suppers in His parables (Matt. 22:2ff; 25:1ff; Luke 12:35ff; 14:7ff; etc.). Christ is the bridegroom (Matt. 9:14–15; John 3:25–30). The church is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5: 22–33). As such, she must keep herself free from all defilement (2 Cor. 11:1–3). Heaven is portrayed as the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7–9). Yet, the imagery of a wedding feast also has application to the assembly of the saints. The words and warnings of Jesus have both immediate and long-term relevance.

Being Inexcusably Absent: Many have a casual attitude toward forsaking the assembly. As it is an honor to be invited to a wedding, so also is it an honor for us to assemble with the saints. Jesus referred to those who callously rejected the king's invitation to attend the wedding feast of his son (Matt. 22:1–10). In like manner, many foolishly forsake the assembling of the saints, not recognizing the benefits and blessings, and also the duties and demands of such occasions (Heb. 10:19–25).

Being Perpetually Late: Many have a casual attitude toward when they arrive at the assembly. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom (Matt. 25:1–13). Five were wise (bringing sufficient reserves) and five were foolish (lacking enough oil). When the bridegroom came, the foolish virgins had to depart and buy more oil for their

lamps. Those who were ready entered with the bridegroom to attend the wedding feast; and the door was shut. When the foolish virgins arrived late, they desired admission, saying, "Lord, lord, open up for us!"

Why were the foolish bridesmaids denied admission? Obviously, they were not sufficiently prepared, nor had they anticipated unforeseen complications. Additionally, their late arrival would have been an unwelcome distraction to the celebration of the wedding feast. Just as we need to be ready for the Lord's return, so also we need to be ready to take part in the Bible classes and the worship (Luke 12:35–40).

A basic rule of life is, "Be On Time!" In business, one hears, "If you are five minutes early, you are ten minutes late." What does this mean? If you're early, you're on time; if you're on time, you're late; if you are late, you are a disturbance and a distraction. Edification cannot occur in the midst of distractions (1 Cor. 14:26–33).

Being Inappropriately Dressed: Many have a casual attitude toward how they are dressed in the assembly. Jesus taught His disciples the dangers inherent in treating a holy occasion as though it were of no significance. In the aforementioned parable of the wedding feast, recorded in Matthew 22:1–14, the king looked over the dinner guests and saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes (v. 11). He asked, "Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?" And the man

was speechless (v. 12). As punishment, he was bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness, in that place of weeping and gnashing of teeth (v. 13). While seeking to balance our comments with the teaching of James 2:1–7, which contrasts the differing attitudes men sometimes show toward the rich and the poor, the elders of the Adoue Street congregation would encourage its members to dress appropriately, especially those men who take an active role in leading in worship, waiting on the Lord's table, etc. Remember, our clothing makes a statement about our assessment of self, and also reflects our view of the Christian assembly, and the associated activities of worship (cf. Ps. 45:13–15; Zech. 3:1–5).

Being Offensively Irreverent: Moving beyond the marriage feast metaphor, we also note similar manifestations. Many have a casual attitude toward the worship that is offered to God during the assembly. Like cynics from the days of Malachi, they say, "The table of the Lord is to be despised/is defiled," and disdainfully sniff, "My, how tiresome it is!" Yet, all the while, they offer less than their best, i.e., the blind, the lame, the sick and the stolen (Mal. 1:6–14). Today, similar scoffers ridicule the songs, the prayers, observing the Lord's supper, the offering, and last but not least, the preaching. Warning against this spirit, Jude spoke of those men who defile the flesh, reject authority, and revile angelic majesties and the things which they do not un-