



Written by Evangelist Van Billingsley

Are you an Extremist? We hear this term frequently in the news media and it is normally used in a negative way. Going to the extreme is usually considered going too far, but is this always the case? Is it always going too far or going overboard to go to the extreme with something?

Extreme means, “The furthest or highest degree of something,” or “The point located farthest from the middle of something.” We usually hear groups or individuals described as extremists when the intent is to portray them as being radical, or going beyond what is acceptable. This is

the way “Fundamentalists” are often described, as we discussed in a previous article.

The question to consider is “Extreme what?” If a thought, activity, belief system or even religion has error in it, then the extreme will be extreme error. On the other hand, is there anything wrong with being extremely right as in correct? Is there any problem with extreme truth? There is if you do not like the truth! That is the case with many in the world today.

In one sense, “extreme” refers to the distance from the center. In this case we usually have two extremes

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and when this is applied to beliefs such as political or theological positions, the middle is often considered moderate. Some people believe the moderate position or the center is the "balanced" viewpoint and where one should try to arrive. I've heard advice such as "Whenever there are two extremes to a position, the truth usually lies somewhere in the middle." Is this true? Not necessarily! One of my cherished college professors, the late Dr. Russell Rice used to say, "Where good men disagree, tread lightly!" I consider that wise advice. To begin with, "good men" would mean sound and doctrinally straight. Then, the advice did not say to not tread at all, but to tread lightly, meaning be very careful. So if there are differing opinions or beliefs and some are to the

extreme in each direction, is the correct view somewhere in the middle? Life sure would be simple if this were true.

Without getting too wordy, I'm afraid most subjects do not even have two extremes along a straight line but have three forming a triangle or even more. One great example of this is the Hyper-Calvinist who says you have no choice in your salvation, and the Hyper-Free Will man who says you can pick it up and lay it down at will, then the Easy Believism proponent which is far from either but says if you simply repeat the magic words you are eternally saved. In this case, the truth may be described as somewhere in the middle, but there are more than two extremes.

This issue of balance has been one that has led us far from the truth in the world

and the church. The problem is, society and even many Christians want to balance everything, when a balance between right and wrong is still wrong. A middle ground between God and man is far too distant from God. There is nothing wrong with being extremely right, in fact, it is the only way to be right. If it is not extremely right, then it is not right. Truth mixed with a little error is a lie. This is one way to test truth. Is it still the truth when you take it to the extreme? If you read a religious book and take it to the extreme and you blow up buildings and kill innocent people, then that book is wrong from the beginning. The Word of God, when rightly divided, can be taken to the extreme and it produces righteous and holy living, love toward one another, and love to those who do not believe as

well. We should be careful with any doctrine which, when taken to the extreme, leads to error.

We live in a society which says you should not take your Christianity to the extreme. It's alright to be a sports fanatic, or a fanatic over just about anything else, but not a Christian fanatic. The Bible teaches that we should be extreme in our devotion to God and His Word. "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments" (Psalm 119:10). "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart" (Psalm 119:34). We should be extreme in our praise to God. "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name" (Psalm 103:1). We should be extreme in all our service. "And whatsoever

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ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:23). "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Ec. 9:10). We

should strive to be extreme Christians; we should be extremely pure and holy, extreme soul winners, extreme Bible readers, extreme worshipers and when it comes to our relationship with Christ, we should be extremists!

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