

Awake To Righteousness

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1 Corinthians 15:34

34) Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame.

1 Timothy 6:11

11) But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Godliness vs Righteousness

Paul, writing to the church rather than unbelievers, separates righteousness from godliness and rightly so. For the virtues are distinctly unique unto themselves. In short, godliness is the reflection of God—traits discovered, acquired, or learned through doctrine found in scriptures. Godliness leads to holiness through an intellectual pursuit and process of learning scriptural precepts that teach the nature of God and can be manifested externally.

The Fruit of Righteousness

Righteousness, on the other hand, is a gift from God that is imputed into the heart of those who obediently submit themselves willingly, unto God, henceforth accessing the abundant and manifold grace of God (Rom. 5:17-18). Righteousness, therefore, is defined as a spiritual understanding, knowledge, or perception of all things right. Righteousness is a qualified and more suitable synonym for the word holiness. One can be godly without being right or righteous. It is godliness without holiness. However, it is impossible to be righteous without being godly—righteousness unto godliness leads unto holiness.

It was a common trait of the Pharisees in the days of Christ to appear godly or pious but void of righteousness and holiness. Knowing what God loves and what God hates is the exemplary trait of righteousness. Righteousness, therefore, thrives from a healthy and clean spiritual networking within our spiritual storehouse of spiritual knowledge and understanding—our conscience. If the conscience becomes handicapped in any form, righteousness is in certain peril. Unrighteousness left to continue without discipline or accountability leads to a reprobate mind. Many today have seared their conscience with a hot iron, thus aborting all means of potential righteousness.

They now call good evil and evil good. Their perception of truth and of knowing what right should look and sound like is being destroyed. They are not simply amoral men, but they are reprobate concerning the faith. They can't live right because they no longer think right. They cannot perceive nor do they possess the knowledge of what right is anymore.

Jeremiah witnessed such a decline of righteousness due to an absence, if not a complete rejection, of the knowledge of truth in his day. Lamenting in Jeremiah 5, he states, "I will get me to the great men... for they have known the way of the Lord, *and* the judgment of their God..."

Form and Fashion

External godliness, or as Paul enunciated, “Having a form of godliness...” or an external form of pious reverence that aligns with scriptural precepts towards holiness, can be dutifully displayed without righteousness ever being realized. We are further warned, “...from such turn away.”

Reflections or Perceptions?

Godliness is an external “reflection” of God. Righteousness is an internal “perception” of all things that pertain to God. You forthrightly know what you know. It is truly a gift of grace.

The Spiritual Fog

Corinth, because of sin, had become a slumbering giant, reduced to a spiritual coma. Paul boldly commanded them to shake themselves and to awake to righteousness and clean living. “Sin not” was the remedy and command issued. He diagnosed their problem by stating the fact many had been sitting for years on the pews of the church and exposed to much teaching and preaching, but still, some had no knowledge of God. This is to your own shame, he declared. The reason some today walk around in a fog and the preacher has to tell them every move to make is they don’t know God. There is a relationship issue. They are like the Pharisees. It is godliness without God. They will never see who God is until they are introduced to Him in their heart. Until then, it’s more rule lists and a preacher on their neck.

Paul said, “from such turn away.” Why would Paul say that concerning other church members? He, for the record, borrowed the words from Christ. Regarding the Pharisees, Jesus said in Matthew 15:14, “Let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind...” They shine externally, but their conscience towards God is as dead men’s bones— whited sepulchers.

They know the Law as an oracle or divine document but have omitted the weightier matters concerning the Law or the spirit of the Law—the Law of Righteousness. It was a relationship issue built on unbelief.

Our Access to Grace

Obedience is a quality of faith, with submission being our access towards grace. James’ epistle declares, “...receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” Some will be lost, not for a lack of preaching, but rather the lack of receiving with meekness the engrafted word of God. The proper response to preaching is to submit to Christ by engraving the law of God within our hearts. When the written word becomes the preached word and is received with meekness of heart, only then does it become the engrafted word. Only then is it able to save our souls.

Paul expands even more so in Romans 2:15, “Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another...” How can Abraham, who was blessed with the imputation of the gift of righteousness, stand justified before God?

By faith, he staggered not at the promises of God. He totally, in blind faith, accepted or received with meekness the known precepts of God based only on what God had said. God said it, and that settled it once and for all in his mind. That perception of truth and of God, fueled by an unwavering faith in God's Word, allowed God to impute righteousness unto him.

At the end of the day, he was called a friend of God. Abraham did not experience the New Covenant infilling of the Holy Ghost as the early church apostles, but what he ultimately received was the gift of righteousness, and that pleased God. Obedience unto submission, unto righteousness, unto godliness, unto holiness. An odyssey into the manifold grace of God.

It's Not Only What You Know, but What You're Willing to Believe

It boils down to the fact that people who don't "get it," is because they don't want it. They don't want it, because they don't believe it. They don't believe it, because they don't love it. They don't love it, because they don't know Him.

Therefore they can never truly live this way until the aforementioned is changed around. Faith, obedience, and submission access the manifold grace of God. Grace through faith.

Faith's Hall of Fame, as cataloged in Hebrews 11, were people who were fully persuaded of these things; therefore, they fully embraced them by faith. It was accounted unto them as righteousness.

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