

## IS DOING RIGHT AND NOT DOING WRONG THE SAME THING? 7/23/23

Act 24:25 Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away..."

If you're getting yourself into a deep hole, the first thing is to stop digging... but you're still in the hole! You've also got to climb out.

We are going to study righteousness. It is more than simply not doing what is wrong. So many Christians feel that if they avoid doing what is wrong (keep the 10 commandments) they are pleasing God. What does the Bible say?

The Holy Spirit uses figurative language often to help us understand unseen spiritual concepts. 1Co 2:10 But God has revealed it to us by the Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

This is because spiritual things are not seen but rather heard and considered. Rom 10:17 Faith comes by hearing...". God teaches us concepts of spiritual health (leading to righteousness) by association with physical things. The Bible gives us figures of speech (mental pictures) to associate the seen with the unseen. Helen Keller learned by associating her teacher's manual alphabet words with other things that she could feel. Eventually, she could "hear" with her fingers on the letters of a book. We are like Helen when it comes to spiritual matters.

Jesus used parables to teach. A lamp, splinter, beam, cloth patch, seed in soil, weeds, mustard seed, leaven, hidden treasure, pearl, a fishnet, lost sheep, coin, prodigal son, tenant vineyard workers, marriage feast, fig trees, servants, virgins, talents, etc. The Bible also uses "types" to teach: Moses, their deliverer was a type of Christ, our deliverer. (see Heb 3:1-6) The flood that saved Noah was a type of immersion that saves us: (see 1 Pet 3:21)

Walking in Light and Darkness is the figure or type for living in Righteousness and Evil: (Proverbs 4:18-19 KJV) (18) But the path of the just {is} as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. (19) The way of the wicked {is} as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

We can learn the answer to our question by the natural order of Righteousness and Evil. But to understand it correctly, we use the biblical analogy of light and darkness. So what is light? Is it the absence of darkness? Can you simply get rid of the darkness to have light? Could I gather up all the darkness in a room and finally have light? How about if I stop sinning to have righteousness? It's a start.

In the physical world darkness is the natural state of things. It takes a conversion of energy to make light. Left to themselves, light returns to darkness like a candle burns out. Likewise, righteousness left unattended returns to wickedness. (ROMANS 1:21) Because that, when they knew God, they glorified {him} not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (KJV)

Notice that the men failed to do certain things and that led to spiritual darkness. Just as light takes energy, so does righteousness.

A short test:

Define the following words which are fruits of righteousness :

1. Modesty: Gal 5 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Patience: 2Co 6 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Purity: 2 Co 6 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Truthfulness: 2Co 6 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Humility: Gal 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Although we are familiar with the above words, have we given a scriptural definition to them? If you're not sure, maybe you should study these some more in light of the scripture.

Did you define the above words in terms of what we are not to do or what we are to do? Did you define these in terms of the associated sin to be avoided or in terms of the righteous action it portrays? If we quit sinning is that shining our light? No

Light is not getting rid of darkness any more than righteousness is getting rid of sin. A person who quits sinning is not yet righteous even though he commits no sin. It is very inadequate to define righteousness as the absence of sin because righteousness is so much more than that just as light is more than an absence of darkness; it is radiation; it is energy, it is working the works of God. John 9:4,5 "As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

A good illustration is:

(John 1:4-5 KJV) (4) In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (5) And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

When Jesus came, the light he brought was not comprehended by the Jews. His exposing of their sins caused them to kill him. If he had merely been sinless (absence of darkness) they would have left him alone. The light exposed the darkness. Light works on darkness like righteousness works on sin.

The Law of Moses could be looked upon negatively: As the law of commandments, sin was forbidden by a series of "Thou shalt nots..."

The Holy Spirit goes further. Paul taught us to look at the other side in (Romans 13:8-10 KJV) (8) Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. (9) For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if {there be} any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (10) Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love {is} the fulfilling of the law. It is like the light that dispels darkness. Love dispels sin.

The Pharisees had found another loophole in the commandments of "Thou shalt nots" and were leaving undone their duties toward their parents. (Matthew 15:5-6 KJV) (5) But ye say, Whosoever shall say to {his} father or {his} mother, {It is} a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; (6) And honour not his father or his mother, {he shall be free}. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. The Pharisees were well known for not doing things wrong; the problem was that they left undone the things they

should have done because they did not have a specific command to do so.

Just getting rid of sin in your life does not make you righteous. This only creates a vacuum. (Matthew 12:43-45 KJV) (43) When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. (44) Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth {it} empty, swept, and garnished. (45) Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last {state} of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

After getting rid of sin we must fill ourselves with righteousness: 2 Peter the first chapter tells us what we are to be doing with our lives after removing sin. We must add the fruits of righteousness. If we don't we will again begin to fall back into the darkness. (Ephesians 5:8-11 ASV) (8) For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light (9) (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), (10) proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord; (11) and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them;

(Romans 13:11-14 ASV)

(11) And this, knowing the season, that already it is time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is salvation nearer to us than when we first} believed. (12) The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. (13) Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. (14) But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to {fulfil} the lusts {thereof}.

Righteous living is more than the avoidance of sin, it is doing what is right. The two kinds of sins we often speak of are sins of commission and sins of omission. Both are darkness.

After leaving the darkness of sin we must partake of the nature of God which includes doing the works of righteousness.

(2Peter 1:4-8 KJV)

We must think of ourselves as in (Matthew 5:14-16 ASV) (14) Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. (15) Neither do {men} light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, put on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. (16) Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.