

General Topics :: The Converting Power of True Holiness

The Converting Power of True Holiness - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/4/30 8:55

I believe this is what we are missing- a living testimony within our own lives! We can preach/teach what we want until the cows come home, but people look at our lives before they listen to our words. Our words should be a direct reflection of our lives.

"Holiness, Truth, and the Presence of God" was one of the first books I read that started to turn my lukewarm Christian life around. This article is adapted from this book.

-The Converting Power of True Holiness-

One of the most common verses in the New Testament reads, "and great multitudes followed Jesus." The gospel of Matthew alone mentions over twenty distinct instances when vast numbers of people traveled great distances to be with Christ. People saw in Jesus meekness, unlimited power, and perfect love. If we would win souls, people must see in us this same Jesus.

When People Saw Jesus

"And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, 'I feel compassion for the multitude, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat.'" Matthew 15:32

There were two occasions when Jesus fed the multitudes. The first event occurred in a desolate region of the Judean wilderness, and it lasted one day. During the second event, the multitudes had been with Jesus for three days without food on a hillside near the Sea of Galilee.

The impact Christ had upon the local Jewish society was unprecedented! Their entire economy stopped. No one picked over or sold vegetables in the marketplaces, goats were not milked, gardens were left untended, and relatives watching little children did not know when the parents would return! For three days nothing at all was normal.

They Left All

These local communities left all when they heard Jesus was near. Without forethought, without packing a donkey, without so much as taking extra food or telling those who remained at home when to expect them, four thousand men, plus additional thousands of women and children, spontaneously followed Christ to a "desolate place." Perhaps ten thousand or more people left their villages, but we read of no one complaining that "the service was too long," or "the weather too hot" or "the message was boring." Whatever they lacked in comfort and convenience was overshadowed by the glory of being with Jesus!

How wonderful it must have been to be with Jesus! The first time Christ fed the multitudes, the people were so overwhelmed they conspired together to "take Him by force, to make Him king" (John 6:15).

Such was Jesus. But a problem exists among many of us. People who do not really know God's Son seek to represent Him to others. Instead of testifying of His wonderful works, they testify only of their religion.

The unsaved do not see Jesus. They hear about church, they are told sin is wrong, lusts are evil, and drunkenness a terrible shame, but they do not see the wonder of the love of Jesus. Yes, these things are wrong, but people must meet the love of Jesus before they will abandon their love of sin.

Called to Silence

Plainly, Jesus called a number of people to silence concerning Himself. There were some whom He told, "See that you tell no one" (Matt. 8:4, also 9:30, 12:16). Others He outright forbade to speak, even though what they spoke was truth (Mark 3:11-12). Still others He warned would be doing great works, yet He neither sent them nor spoke to them, nor did He ever know them (Matt. 7:22-23). Indeed, there were even those of whom He warned whose zeal for converts took them over "sea and land," yet their proselytes became "twice as much a son of hell" as they themselves were (Matt. 23:15).

It is not our goal to discourage any from witnessing, especially when the need is so great in our society. Still, we must realize that what we are routinely - in attitude and deed - is a living testimony that, without our premeditation, is "known and read by all men" (2 Cor. 3:2). A "witness" is not just that which is "said"; it is that which is seen. If we will draw men to Christ in heaven, they must be eyewitnesses of Christ in us. But, if we have flagrant sin or self-righteousness, our witness is non-effective.

Let Your Light So Shine

Light, in the Scriptures, symbolizes the out-shining purity of the Holy God. When our hearts and subsequent actions are pure, the light of God's Presence shines through us into this world. It is with this in mind that Jesus tells us to let our light shine before men in such a way that they see our good works and glorify the Father (Matt. 5:16).

If good works glorify the Father, then bad works bring Him dishonor. Paul tells us that the "name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles" because of the sins of those who fail to represent Him (Rom. 2:24).

King David was a great witness of the Living God to his generation, but when David sinned his witness became a reproach. In the 51st Psalm, David's prayer reveals the right attitudes necessary to truly witness for God. He prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ...Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners will be converted to Thee" (Ps. 51:10-13).

You see, the credibility of our witness is lost when sin rules in our lives. The world has heard too many Christians give testimony to a life they are not living. They cause multitudes of people to think Christianity does not work.

How to Know When to Witness

"But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you...for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence." 1 Peter 3:15

Many Christians are told to witness for Jesus. Again, we would not

discourage your witness for Jesus; rather we seek to encourage you to live for Him as well! Let people see Him in you before you testify. There are Christians who publicly sin in the work place: they lose their tempers and do bad work, they are often late or heard complaining about management and job conditions. Yet, they feel compelled to give their testimony. They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him (Titus 1:16). A "voice" in their minds compels them to "witness for Jesus." Sometimes that voice is the Holy Spirit, but more often it is not. Undaunted, they are sure it is from heaven, since they feel "guilty" until they witness and feel "good" afterward.

There is one sure way to know if the voice urging you to witness is from God: If the voice speaking to you is the audible voice of someone who has seen your good works and is asking about your way of life, that voice has been inspired by God. When people see Christ in you - in your patience when wronged, your peace in adversity, your forgiveness amidst cruelty - they will ask about your hope.

The Seed of Reproduction is in Your Fruit

If your conversion is genuine, you found a love for Jesus that is, in itself, a witness of His life. Unfortunately, we often seek to lead people into our religion instead of to Christ. How often we seek to convert our family and friends into a particular church structure. People must be led to Jesus, not merely to church.

Let us always remember, Jesus wants to reach people, not drive them away. How does God expect us to do that? First, let us make sure our conversion is real, that we have truly given over our lives to Jesus Christ. Then, determine to bear the spiritual fruit of love and humility in your life.

In the Garden of Eden the Lord placed trees with "seed in the fruit." Remember, beloved, the seed that has power to reproduce life is in the fruit. If you would like to see the life of Christ reproduced in your loved ones or friends, walk in the fruit of the Spirit, for the power of reproduction is in the seed and the seed is in your fruit. The fruit we must display comes from the Tree of Life, which brings "healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2). It is not in the tree of knowledge of good and evil - legalistic laws, judging what is wrong in people.

A Sure Sign

Should you sin or stumble before them, which we all do at times, repent both to God and to those you have sinned against. A sincere repentance to an unsaved person is a sure sign that God is both real and in control of your life!

Parents: do you want your children raised for Christ? Do you want your words to impart eternal life? Walk in the fruit of the Holy Spirit. As your children are nourished by the fruit in your life, the seeds within your fruitfulness will reproduce in your family the same qualities. Would you convert your spouse? Your parents? Your friends? Walk in the fruit of the Spirit, in love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness. Those who know you will find your life very attractive, for through your life they will see the holy life of Jesus.

Adapted from Holiness, Truth and the Presence of God -By Francis Frangipane

Re: The Converting Power of True Holiness - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/4/30 10:38

Just for the record, I do not support everything francis frangipane says or does. He has alot of wisdom in the area of Christ-likeness, which i can always use more of. I know he is invloved with what many call the prophetic movement, so I just pick out the treasure and let the rest fall away.

Satisfied in Him alone, chanin

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/4/30 10:47

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Chanin I totally agree with you that we shouldn't blackball a person always because of his associations. I think this is a g reat article and worth reading. Its like picking the wheat and burning the chaff.

Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/4/30 11:04

Thanks Greg!

Also:

Quote:
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I know many people just like this. They witness (or try to) all over the place- yet by their actions and attitudes (showing lack of fruits of the spirit) they deny Him and lose their witness altogether.

Yet, I believe they think this will "make-up" for any lack of holiness in their life. "Well, I won't surrender this area- BUT I will witness to five people this week!"

God does not accept this- and even worse, **if someone does receive their witness and comes to Christ by their leading and testimony- they are in grave danger of making them into worse sinners than themselves!**

If only the gospel was preached in truth. If people were disciplined properly to continue to give up their "selves". You just don't see this anymore. Maybe it has not gone on since the first disciples were around.

All I can say is SURRENDER!

Satisfied in Him alone, Chanin

Re: - posted by rocklife (), on: 2004/5/1 23:59

Great comments, guys!

I agree with you guys here, many people, especially in non American parts of the world, want to know one's character and integrity before something so personal as religion can be honestly talked about with someone from a different religion. If they notice you tell them you will call but don't, you don't show up on time, that impacts their thoughts about you tremendously. A person like that is not considered trustworthy by so many employers, why should something as important as God be taken seriously by someone who can't even be decent enough to do what they say. Many countries do not lie like Americans, I know Japanese consider that very cowardly. It's not nice to be brutally honest, but my mom and all her Japanese relatives think brutal honesty is normal and lying is stupid and cowardly. Other cultures look at people's character closely, and Christians need to be reminded of that. Some cultures, past and present, believe the words you say is a part of you, and in a way, that is true.

This thread has expressed that very well, we must show our witness first in our actions and lives, if we are still immature in that, then study, read the Bible every day, pray and get to know God more, obey Jesus, and you will grow. That's what I'm doing myself right now, learning and being discipled, and allowing God to change me more and more. I pray my life is a witness even in these baby stages of my Christian maturity (I'm 3 year old christian). At the same time, my zealousness has had to tell others about my life changes, and one of my hobbies is mailing tracts, bibles, and gospels of John to ex-cons and poor people (African people request them on the internet, and it is common knowledge they have a shortage of bibles). It's not work to earn points with God, it's because I can't keep this good stuff all to myself. With my closer neighbors and family, though, a life style witness is very valuable, I believe it's also biblical.