

Thursday, August 1, 2013 - Set apart from the World

A Gallup Group concluded: "Churchgoers do not differ appreciably from non-churchgoers in matters of moral and ethical behavior." It further states that the gap between religious thinking and human thinking has narrowed over the years to the point where there is little or no gap anymore. The gap has narrowed mostly as a result of the "religious" coming around to the world's way of thinking, rather than by the world being converted. In other words, the "religious" have become "conformed unto the world" and not the world conformed unto Christ.

God desires the Christian to live in the world, to be light and salt (Matt. 5:13-15). Great care must be given by the disciple of Jesus not to become like the world in which he is living. The child of God has the difficult task of balancing his necessary contact with the world with the danger of being adversely influenced by it (1 Cor. 15:33). Scriptures teach beyond a shadow of a doubt that Christians, God's Chosen people, are to be different from those who are in the world. Paul tells us in Rom. 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Living in the world and living by the world's standards is NOT the same thing.

The Bible says that Children of God are brought out of the darkness of the world into the Light of His dear Son. We are to be the lights of the world since we abide in Christ and follow His example. Consider the following passages:

Matt 5:14 – "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden"

John 8:12 – "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

Col. 1:12-13 – "...giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love"

1 Thess. 5:5 – "You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness"

1 John 1:5-7 – "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with

Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

The reason we are to be different is that we have been bought – bought with the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. Acts 20:28 reminds us, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

We are a chosen people, a special people inasmuch as the gospel is addressed to all (Mark 16:15-16), all who believe and obey it are chosen to salvation. In Peter's declaration to those who were being persecuted, he reminded them that “...you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).”

With this understanding we realize that there are certain marks on children of God that show distinction and possession by God.

1) Our entire walk in life is different. Eph. 5:8-10 encourages us that “...you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.” When we walk in sin, we walk in darkness of the truth, but when we learn of the truth as it is in Jesus, we can walk according to the teachings of his life. The fruit of light, of knowing and doing this truth of God, is to produce a life in goodness and righteousness and truth.

2) We walk by faith and not by sight. Paul's reminder to the church at Corinth was, “...we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2 Cor. 5:7-10).”

With God's help, the child of God can endure the temporary trials and afflictions of this world, knowing that his suffering is working for him a far greater weight of eternal glory (2 Cor. 4:17). God will NOT allow us to face any situation that we can't overcome (1 Cor. 10:13). With an eternal perspective, the child of God can rise above the wicked and shameful treatment that he will inevitably experience and become a beacon to those in the world who are groping for God in the dark.

The people that associate with you each day, whether it be at school, work, games, etc.:
can they tell a difference between you and those in the world?