

How to Love the Good

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. The righteous saved do not just do truth and right; they love truth and right.
 - 1. Prov. 21:15, 10:29; Psalm 1:2; James 1:25; 1Cor. 10:23; 1Peter 3:13
 - 2. "The really important thing is not to live, but to live well; and to live well means the same thing as to live honorably or rightly." (Socrates)
 - 3. "If you don't have a righteous objective, eventually you will suffer. When you do the right thing for the right reason, the right result awaits." (Chin-Ning Chu)
- B. The ancient philosophers said, "Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you." A negative approach
 - 1. Matt. 7:12 - Jesus stated it positively
 - 2. The difference between negatively refraining from doing evil and positively doing good is illustrated by the Samaritan - Luke 10:25-37

I. REDEFINING GOODNESS AND MORALITY

- A. Most people would consider the priest and Levite good, moral people
 - 1. These men would have been repulsed by the immorality of the thugs who beat and robbed the traveler.
 - 2. Like many acquaintances, they would be viewed as "decent, clean, upstanding folks who were basically on the side of what is right?"
- B. How do many, including disciples, define good and moral?
 - 1. Not murdering, not committing adultery, not lying, etc.
 - 2. We often congratulate ourselves for being above average morally, because we would not engage in the sins we see others committing?
 - 3. Is the strength of our morality measured by the intensity of the negative feelings we have about immorality?
 - 4. Are we good because we have a list of things we are against?
- C. If this is how we define our morality, our righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees; they scrupulously avoided unrighteousness.
 - 1. Matt. 5:20; Luke 18:9-11
 - 2. The Pharisees were not sanctified, but sanctimonious, which is hypocritical high-mindedness

II. GOODNESS AND MORALITY ARE PROACTIVE

- A. There is more to being good than looking down on immorality
 - 1. "Loving what is right is different than hating what is wrong and feeling right about it" (Roy Masters).
 - 2. There are many things in the world for which we ought to feel genuine revulsion, but we must not confuse the feeling of distaste for wrong with true love for goodness and right.
 - 3. We do not truly succeed in being on the side of truth and goodness if all we do is criticize evil.
- B. Do we love justice? - Matt. 25:41-45; Isa. 1:16-17

III. KNOWING GOOD AND DOING GOOD

A. We become good when we do the good that we know should do

1. We tend to judge others by whether they do what is right, while we judge ourselves by what we believe is right.
2. We think of ourselves as good because we know our goals are good; we know we are capable of doing good and intend to do it someday.
3. However, the person who truly loves what is right is not just the person with high ideals and plenty of potential; he is an authentic doer of good.
4. "Can do and have done don't live in the same neighborhood!"
5. James 1:21-27, 2:14, 24, 26, 4:17
6. "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing." (Edmund Burke)
7. Are folks "good" who passively sit by and let evil triumph, disapproving of it all the while?

B. Loving good demands doing good.

1. When it comes to standing on the right side, by just believing in the good are we actually standing on the other side by our inaction?
 - a. Obad. 10-11
2. There is happiness and blessings in doing the right thing when we know to do it - John 13:17
3. "This life therefore is not righteousness, but growth in righteousness, not health, but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it, the process is not yet finished, but it is going on, this is not the end, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified." (Martin Luther)