

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Review Republican
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RIGHTEOUSNESS MUST BE PRACTICED TO BE ACHIEVED

Max Beerbohm wrote a story entitled, "The Happy Hypocrite." The title sounds like a paradox, doesn't it? The story was about a character whose face personified evil. The man was faced with a dilemma: the woman he loved refused to marry him because he didn't look saintly. To solve the problem, the suitor put on a mask with a kind face. The young woman married him despite the face underneath the mask. Her husband proved to be an attentive, unselfish husband.

One day in a moment of rage, an enemy abruptly tore off her husband's mask before his wife's eyes. Instead of a cruel, grotesque face, the man had become what he had lived for many years. Kindness, not evil, radiated from his face!

The Bible urges us to "keep the faith" because someday we will look like Him in whom we believe (1 John 3:2).

1 John 3:1-10 (NASB)

1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself, just as He is pure. 4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. 5 And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are

obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

God loves us. Don't ever doubt that. He shows that love to us in many ways. In today's text the believers are called His children. That is a very comforting thought. Without Christ as your Savior you will never understand this verse. When we commit our lives to Jesus and his service we become members of God's family and as members of His family we are loved so deeply we probably don't understand it ourselves.

We are not presently immortal. We don't have an immortal soul and our future depends on our relationship with God through His Son, Christ Jesus. If you are in Christ you have the promise of the coming kingdom of God and immortality. This immortality is given to us at the return of Christ. Our being "like Him" means that we will become immortal on that day when Jesus returns to our planet.

Because of this we are to be practicing the righteous life now in preparation for that day when we will experience our complete change. If we practice this right way to live now we can be sure the future looks bright and that gives us hope. The old adage "practice makes perfect" might have come from these verses of the Holy Scriptures. We need to practice, practice, practice and practice until we get it right. This is our life work. The more we attempt to live the right way with our lives the better we become at living that life. Remember "The Happy Hypocrite"?

Our problem is that we often practice sin instead of righteousness. We must stop practicing sin and learn to live righteous lives. We must decide each day which side we want to be on when Jesus returns to Planet Earth.

Why did Jesus die for man and his sin? He was sent of God the Father to die for our sins and make us right with the Father. Adam and Eve broke our relationship with God, and Jesus makes it possible for us to get our lives in order with God again.

If you want to be part of "Paradise restored" you must practice righteousness. Live right, by God's rules, and in Christ and you can be part of the restored earth. Better days are ahead for the Children of God.

We become righteous in Christ and by practicing righteousness. We are sinners if we continue to practice sin and follow the devil and his lies. What are you practicing?

Jesus' ministry on our planet was to defeat satan and his influence in our lives and make us righteous before God. To become a child of God you must accept what Jesus has done for you to make you part of the Family of God.

So What Shall We Do?

Our first step is to accept Jesus and what he did for us at the cross of Calvary. Accept that he died for your sins and offers you eternal righteousness when he returns to earth.

Our second step is to love one another. This includes sharing the gospel message of the kingdom and Jesus the King of that kingdom. We need to give others hope and let them know that righteousness is possible. With Christ and our practice we will one day awake in the Kingdom of God and be like Him. We will receive immortality and will be righteous for eternity. I long for the day our mask is torn away and we will be like our God and His Son: righteous in all we think and do.

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