

Basic Questions

Neil Girrard

There are two very basic questions that cast considerable doubt on much, if not nearly all, of modern religious Christianity. The first is: What does a real Christian life look like? If we take the New Testament at its word, a genuine Christian would be one who, having been born again of the Spirit (Jn. 3:5), follows Jesus Christ by stepping away from darkness and walking in light (Jn. 8:12, Col. 1:12-13, etc.) and exhibits character qualities consistent with God's nature. (Gal. 5:22-23)

What then do we do with those throngs of people who parade in and out of modern "churches" every week to gain more knowledge of the Bible but who never actually do anything that produces anything consistent with God's life? What do we do with those "leaders" who are more concerned with building and gaining their own following or their own lucrative career than they are in building God's kingdom? What do we do with those "committed believers" who drive right past their brothers and neighbors in need and do nothing to bring the love of Christ to them? We need not "do" anything with them really for their judgments and rewards are adding up. But how do we embrace them as full-fledged brothers in Christ when the fruits of their lives are so questionable?

The second basic question for the real Christian is: What is his "mission in life"? That is, what ought the primary goals of his life be? Again, if we take the New Testament at its word, we find simultaneously great liberty and great responsibility laid upon the genuine follower of Christ. And this "mission in life" can be summed up in one word: love. The genuine follower of Christ is to love God first and then love all men around him as God enables him to do so. Love for God is synonymous with obeying His commands. (1 Jn. 5:2-3)

What then of the man who virtually abandons his family for half to three quarters of his weekly allotted time, both by going off "to work" and sending the children away to school just so that he and his family can live in a luxurious mansion that far exceeds their needs and can play with toys and gadgets that do more to waste their time than it prepares his family for God's kingdom? What then of the teacher who sees the gospel as a way to solve all the world's problems overnight? This utopian dreamer does not follow Christ – except one of his own imagination. What then of the man who, with or without a pulpit, gathers as many people as he can to sit at his feet so that he can teach them of his knowledge of "the gospel"? Never mind that his primary motivation is not the divine love of the Shepherd for wandering, wayward, shepherdless sheep but rather his avowed determination – made years ago – to be someone significant in the eyes of others?

Again, we really need not "do" anything with these "brothers." Paul's instruction covers it well: "Note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the teachings [of Christ – not modern, denominational churchianity and all of its accumulations of filth and errors] which you learned [from the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of Christ and God], and *avoid them.*" (Rom. 16:17) The day is coming very soon now when "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness [what is right in a man's own eyes], and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Mt. 13:41-43) No, we need not be overly concerned with others – we need only be certain that our interactions with them do not cause us to bring defilement into our own life with God, on

offense most often accomplished by negligence and carelessness, one easily avoided by diligence, care and vigilance.

Let those who are truly righteous in God's eyes fulfill their life's mission to love God and to love and serve those around them as God enables and directs. Let those who are uncertain as to what fruit their lives are really producing seek their confirmations and discernment only from the Spirit of God and not rely on the flattering praises of treacherous or deceived men. Let those who are evil be evil still. (Rev. 22:11)

Let he who has ears hear.

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