

I Want to be Right With God

September 2, 2018

1st Timothy 6:17-19

17 As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, 19 thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

First of all I want to point out that the Bible does not condemn being rich. Many of the Bible heroes were wealthy. What the Bible does here is it instructs the responsibility that comes with being wealthy. Some of the biblical examples include the parable of the rich fool found in Luke 12:16-21 where the wealthy man produced abundantly and built larger barns to store up his treasures here on earth as opposed to storing up treasures in heaven. So, the conflict is one of earthly desire over heavenly desire. It is a matter of putting trust in God. What you, as a Christian, want in life is to be right with God. In 1st Timothy 6:7-10 the desire to be rich is a cause to fall into temptation. It is the same basic problem. It is a matter of where the heart is; whether your heart set on earthly things or heavenly things. In James 1:10 the rich will be brought low which seems like condemnation of being rich but actually it is proverbial wisdom. In Proverbs 11:28 it is advised that if you trust in riches it will wither away. Again, it is a matter of where you put your trust - in God or in something else. The conflict is a matter of putting God 1st or valuing something else more than God.

If there is anything we want in life it is to be right with God. Trusting in God is taught over and over again in the Bible. It is a matter of faith and belief. It takes confidence in God to trust God, to trust that God will provide for you and care for you. The Bible teaches to be rich in good work, to be generous, and to share. It is a matter of focus. The desire to be rich is to focus on the self. Whereas, good work, being generous, and sharing is a matter of focusing on the benefit of others. Collectively, the focus is on the overall good for all. It is a matter of doing what is good for the group.

Recently I was reading and I came across a situation where people were asked what do you want before you die. There were various answers. "I want to travel overseas. I want to be famous. I would like to be a Rhodes Scholar. I really want to be a hero." Finally someone said "before I die I want to be right with God." When I read that I thought someone has it right. Then I began to wonder why didn't everyone else have a similar answer? Is it that we instinctively focus on the self and fail to focus on God. Do we take God for granted?

The purpose driven Christian is someone that desires to be right with God. The Christian believes in Jesus and follows his teachings. The purpose driven Christian is driven to achieve the ultimate goal of hearing the words "well done my good and faithful servant." In order to hear those words, nothing can be taken for granted. You cannot assume you are right because you cannot judge yourself. The reason you cannot judge yourself is because the Lord is the judge. The Lord will judge you by the Lord's standards whereas we judge the self by our own standards. If your goal is to hear the words "well done my good and faithful servant" then your goal is also to be right with God. This means you have to do everything that the Lord commands. This takes discipline and devotion, to study the word, be diligent in prayer, and to be a community of faith. It takes dedication, commitment, and focus to put God first. But I think more importantly it takes love and appreciation. When you love and appreciate the Lord then focusing on God comes natural.

When it comes to reaching your goal I recommend to shoot for a surplus. I know that I am a human that is capable of making mistakes. I am capable of getting things wrong and capable of missing my goal. Even when I have the best of intentions I can miss my goal, in life, in work, or in school. Even with the best of dedication and commitment that I have. So, if there is a possibility that I might miss my goal, and there is that possibility because that possibility exists with everything, I want to miss the goal with room for error in my favor. So, I'm going to shoot for more, I want to hit the mark that the Lord dictates, so I will aim with a surplus to account for the possibility of human error. In our contemporary society most people do not have the due diligence or the discipline to do everything that the Lord commands. I think that assuming that you are right with God is the most dangerous assumption you can make. To assume that you are right could easily lead to slacking off. Let's say I want to win a race and I am in school on the track team. If I assume that I will win the race then I might slack off, be less disciplined, and put out less effort. I will do the practice but I won't push myself harder. But if I am scared that I might lose, question the possibility that I might not be good enough, and realize how important the race is then I will give my all.

In conclusion, we have the grace of God and all is forgiven. It is real easy to take that for granted. But we have a response to God's grace and a desire to be right with God. So, that means I am not going to take the grace for granted. I am going to appreciate the grace and out of appreciation do the good works, be generous, and share. Furthermore, since I respond to grace out of appreciation, then I find the joy in giving, serving, worshiping and the desire to be right with God.