

The Righteousness of God

By David Phillips

Introduction

1. Many people today pursue some form of righteousness.
2. Often a person's perception of righteousness is far different from that of God.
 - a. "The Bible teaches against homosexuality; therefore those who are tolerant of it are more righteous than the God of the Bible."
 - b. "The God of the Bible is unfair because He destroyed all those nations in the Old Testament; therefore I am more righteous."
 - c. Even the Jews sought to establish their own righteousness rather than the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3).
3. In all of these cases the scripture are true which says, "*For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.*"
4. How can learn the difference between the righteousness of men and the righteousness of God? Let us consider this point.

Discussion

I. The Righteousness of God Vs. The Righteousness of Men.

- A. God's ways are above our ways (Isa. 55:8-9).
 1. Therefore His righteousness cannot be determined by our feelings or our conscience.
 2. It cannot be found in the creeds and traditions of men.
- B. The wisdom of men is foolishness to God (1 Cor. 3:19-20).
 1. Therefore God's righteousness can only be found in one place,
 2. His revelation (Ps. 119:1-8)

II. The Nature of Man's Righteousness

- A. The righteousness of men is self-centered.
 1. The Pharisees: Rom. 10:2; Matt. 23:4-5.
 2. False Teachers: 1 Cor. 4:6-7.
 3. Human Tradition: Col. 2:18.
- B. The righteousness of men glorifies men rather than God.
 1. It looks for ways to puff us up, as we have already noted in 1 Cor. 4:6-7 and Col. 2:18.
 2. It is often based on a standard that "I have achieved," but not very many other people achieved. Therefore it always varies from person to person.
 - a. The rich person is "more righteous" than most because they were committed enough to go to school. The poor person is "more righteous" than most because they aren't so dependent upon worldly things that they need to have all the best stuff.
 - b. The person who know proper etiquette is more righteous that the person who does not.
 - c. Finally, in today's world it seems that the person who is able to make their religion the most tolerant of others is the most righteous.
 3. Each of these may glorify "me" if I am able to achieve then, but none of them are of any use for glorifying God.

- C. Perhaps the most blatant manifestation of self-righteousness is that it binds traditions upon men where God's word does not
 - 1. Rom. 14:1-4 – “doubtful things,” vs. 13 “stumbling block.”
 - 2. That is, when we take things that are neither commanded nor condemned by God and bind them on other men then we become guilty of establishing our own righteousness rather than God's.

III. The Righteousness of God.

- A. God's righteousness is defined by love.
 - 1. All of the laws which God gives mankind, all of the rules we are bound to are meant to help us accomplish to basic tasks.
 - a. Matt. 22:37: “*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*”
 - b. Matt. 22:39: “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*”
 - 2. Therefore, when we practice the righteousness of God we are not the ones who will be exalted and glorified, but God.
 - a. 1 Cor. 6:20: “*For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*”
 - b. Both individually and collectively – Rom. 15:5-6: “*Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”
 - 3. When we practice the righteousness of God we will strive to lift up our neighbors rather than tear them down.
 - a. Rom. 12:10: “*Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.*”
 - b. Phil. 2:3: “*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*”
 - 4. If we are striving for the righteousness of God then we will put other people's needs before our own, not necessarily their wants.
 - a. No person wants to think they are wrong.
 - b. But every person needs to know that they are lost and separated from God's grace without repentance.
 - c. No person wants to feel like they are lost.
 - d. But every person needs to know that they are lost unless they turn and obey the commands of God.
 - e. Therefore the unlike the righteousness of men, God's righteousness does not tolerate those who want to “do their own thing,” rather, it compels them to change!
- B. There are many, many applications we can make with this principle, but for now we will only make a few and, Lord willing, we will continue to make applications for the rest of our lives.
- C. God's righteousness teaches humility.
 - 1. The humility to be able to teach people of all classes and positions in life.
 - 2. The humility to change an aspect of my life that does not match up with that of Christ.
 - 3. The humility to accept criticism and correction without becoming so depressed that we cannot to anything with that correction (.
 - 4. The humility to learn from others (Heb. 10:24-25).
 - 5. The humility to lay down our life for our brethren (1 John 3:17).
- D. God's righteousness teaches respect.

1. Though we are of a heavenly kingdom, we are still taught to respect the authorities that are on the world (1 Pet. 2:13ff.).
 2. Even as adults we are commanded to respect our parents (2 Tim. 3:2).
 - a. Notice that those described in this verse are those who are accountable, but have gone astray from the truth, have denied the righteousness of God. These are growth people.
 - b. Yet they are disobedient to parents.
 - c. The righteousness of God teaches us to respect those who are older than us, for their age is their honor (Lev. 19:32; Prov. 20:29).
 - d. But this is an attitude or characteristic that is easiest to learn in our youth.
 - e. Therefore this lesson is not only for the Christians here, but also for the youth among us; if you want to please God, if you want to join Christ when He comes then learn to respect those older than you, especially your parents.
- E. God's righteousness teaches devotion.
1. Most religions in this world teach that we can do what we want, as long as we believe.
 2. The righteousness of God shows us that if we are to please Him, we must devote our lives to living like Him.
 - a. Eph. 5:1-2: *"Therefore be imitators of God as dear children."*
 - b. 1 John 2:6: *"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."*
 3. In order for us to truly strive for the righteousness of God then we must obey Him in all things. If this is not our goal, then it is not God's righteousness that we seek.

Conclusion

1. Is this the righteousness that we are striving for in your life?
2. If you are not a Christian then you can begin today. Jesus has said that "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." If you believe, then you may.
3. If you are a Christian and have realized that you have been falling short in your efforts, then you can repent of your sins and take advantage of God's forgiveness which allows us to change our life.