

*In
Search
of*

Truth and Right

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Philippians 4:8 (NASB-U)

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Christ**

You're not a Christian just because ... [2]

By: Steven Harper

In last week's article, we considered some faulty associations that people make about what it means to be a Christian. Those faulty associations, and others we will cover in the next few weeks, give false impressions to others and false comfort to ourselves if we believe them true. It would be wise to consider these faulty associations and see **why** the association is faulty that we may understand what it means to **truly** be a disciple of Jesus Christ—a Christian. If you, the reader, are holding any of these faulty associations and assumptions about what it means to be a Christian, my hope is that you will honestly examine these things and choose to do what **God** says you must do to become a child of God.

That said, let us now take a look at some more faulty associations or beliefs about who is a Christian:

You Are Not A Christian Just Because: You Are Religious. In last week's article, we addressed the false idea that just because your parents are religious, that means you are a Christian; it is no truer if **you** are "religious"! Many people in this country and around the world are "religious" but have no idea who Jesus really is and could not honestly say they have been convinced by God's evidence that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Even if you are predisposed to hearing and approving of religious matters, this does not make you a Christian! Just because you say you love God and even though you may offer up some form of worship to one you call "God", that alone does not make you a Christian!

Does that sound exclusive? According to what many religious leaders teach and preach, you'd think that just about anyone who

TIMES OF SERVICES	
SUNDAY	
Bible Classes*	10:00 AM
AM Worship	10:45 AM
PM Worship	6:30 PM
WEDNESDAY	
Bible Classes*	7:00 PM
(* Bible Classes for All Ages)	

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calls himself a Christian and acts somewhat interested in spiritual matters would be saved and could call themselves “believers.” But just because we say it so, does it make it so? Of course not!

In the first century, the apostle Paul traveled about, teaching and preaching the gospel. [The gospel, just for the sake of a reminder, is the message from God that teaches us that Jesus Christ came to this earth and died for our sins as a sinless man, was raised from the dead on the third day, and has ascended into heaven where He now reigns as King.] When Paul preached that message, some people believed and some did not, but only those who believed it and obeyed were called Christians. That has not changed, though we are almost 2000 years removed from his day.

Once, when Paul came to the city of Athens, he saw the pervasive idolatry and was stirred to speak to them about the God they did not know (**Acts 17:16-23**). When Paul spoke to them at the Areopagus, he began by saying, “*Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious*” (**v. 22**). What Paul said was true! One commentator on the book of Acts said, “Where we are used to seeing street lamp poles, street name markers, fire plugs, and mail boxes on every corner, Paul saw evidences (in the idols and altars) of the degradation [of the city]” [Gareth Reese, *New Testament History: Acts*, p. 621.] Reese also quotes one of Athens' own satirists, Petronius, who said of the city: “It is easier to find a god than a man.” Paul was right when he said the men of Athens were religious, but was he saying they were Christians? Absolutely not!

These men were clearly “religious”, but they knew nothing about the true God and less about His Son, Jesus Christ. This being true, there was no possible way they could have honestly been called “Christians” because they had not even heard of Him up to that point! [Remember, “*Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ*” (**Romans 10:17**).] When Paul finally taught them about the Christ, we find “*some mocked*” the idea of a resurrected Christ and others put him off until a later time (**v. 32**), but some believed (**v. 34**)! Only when those individuals heard and believed could they have been truly called Christians. Friends, the same is true today (**Mark 16:15, 16**)! Just because you are religious does not mean you are a Christian.

You Are Not A Christian Just Because: Your Parents Are Christians. As we stated in last week's article, many very sincere people honestly believe their parents' faith automatically makes them a Christian and, thus, right in the sight of God. Some people whose parents have obeyed God's word have not been taught by their parents that their faith must be their **own** and that it is not something one may “inherit.” Somewhere along the line, someone forgot to tell their children “*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned*” (**Mark 16:16**) and now their children think “whoever **is the child of one who** believes and is baptized shall be saved.”

Such is simply not true.

Under the Old Testament, the Jews came to believe something similar to this; they came to believe that simply being born into the nation of Israel was what made them right in the sight of God, and not anything to do with their heart and their obedience to Him. They became so convinced of this that they actually began to think, “*Is not the LORD in the midst of us? No disaster shall come upon us*” (**Micah 3:11**), and, “*The LORD will not do good, nor will He do ill.*” (**Zephaniah 1:12**). Even in the first century, Paul addressed some who had this idea that they had some sort of “inherent righteousness” just because they were Israelites; in the Roman letter, he wrote to the ones who took pride in calling themselves Jews and boasted in God (**Romans 2:17**), and who were convinced they were leaders to the [spiritually] blind (**v. 18**), and yet he had to point out that it was not their outward, or physical, makeup that made them right in the sight of God, but their hearts.

Today's Sermon:

*“Tator”
Family*

Mark 14:9

Years removed from the time Paul wrote those words, we still have such a problem among those who were born into a family whose parents were Christians. Still today, we have many who believe that, somehow, just because they were born into a family of believers, that makes **them** a believer! I recall reading a visitor's card from years ago that I will likely not forget; on the line with the check box about their church affiliation, this person wrote, "I was born Church of Christ!" [The underlining and exclamation point were included.] I have heard those same words from a few of my brethren, too!

This concept is very prevalent among a few religious groups of this world. When statistics are published that indicate the world's religious affiliations, you will see large numbers of Roman Catholics and Islamists [Muslims]; the fact is, those who provide those numbers have this "inherited religion" mentality and consider anyone born into a family of believers a member of that religious group, and they will continue this association for several generations! [In other words, one whose great-grandparents were members of the Roman Catholic Church are considered members because their parents were children of members and now **they** are children of children of members.] As much as men would like to believe that being born into a certain family makes you right in the sight of God, it most certainly does not. It is no better when brethren have this same mind set!

God once had to remind His people, "*The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself*" (**Ezek. 18:20**). Some had a false idea about what made them right [or wrong] in the sight of God; some still have that false idea. But what was true then is true even now: Each individual has the responsibility of obedience to God's will and if they have not obeyed, it doesn't matter what their parents have done, or even their grandparents. The question is, Have **you** obeyed?

News N Notes

Remember these in your prayers:

- Lucille Harless, Dave Harless' mother
- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband.
- Blake Swanson, Dorothy Lancaster's grandson
- Virginia Malick, Peggy Miller's mother
- Roy Rhodes, Peggy Miller's brother
- Merl Frey
- Tammy Garrison, Zeda Goddard's daughter
- Audrio Gaudio, Nancy Morris' great-granddaughter
- Mabel Fleming
- Ed & Marie Roberts, & Ed's father, Jim Roberts.
- Ila Marshall, Harold Marshall's mother
- Cary & Grace Lancaster

Nursing Home:

- Hazel Carroll
- Pauline Sellers
- Rhea Henthorn

Shut-ins:

- Ethel Mahan
- Josephine Clow
- Mabel Fleming
- Pauline Midcap