

# Self-Righteousness

“But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.”  
Isaiah 66:2

## I. GOD LOOKS FOR CERTAIN MEN

- A. The great Lord our God is not impressed by external religion, no matter how costly.
  - 1. For He has made all things and uses them already as His throne and ottoman.
  - 2. All these have been from ancient time, therefore man has nothing to plead.
- B. The great Lord our God will condescend to men who by internal religion are holy.
  - 1. They must be poor – this is spiritually poor rather than financially poor.
  - 2. They must have a contrite spirit – a heart broken and repentant for all sins.
  - 3. They must tremble at His Word – they fear the Author and His commandments.
- C. The great God dwells with the lowly and humble and contrite ones (Isaiah 57:15).
- D. God had mercy upon Josiah for his tender humility and penitence (II Kings 22:19).

## II. GOD HATES SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

- A. God hated the self-righteousness of wicked Israel and judged it (Isaiah 65:1-7).
- B. And of course, these self-righteous hypocrites will use the Lord’s name (Is 66:5).
- C. The wise man taught against wisdom in your own conceit (Proverbs 26:12,16).
- D. Jesus condemned the self-righteousness of the Pharisees (Luke 18:9-14; 16:15).
  - 1. A lawyer tried to excuse himself from loving his neighbor (Luke 10:25-37).
  - 2. Rebelling and repenting is far superior to hypocritical sinning (Matt 21:28-32).
  - 3. Jesus condemned the hypocritical self-righteousness of the Pharisees (Luk 12:1).
  - 4. And He taught His disciples to have true righteousness above them (Matt 5:20).
  - 5. Jesus came to call sinners rather than the righteous to repentance (Mk 2:15-17).
- E. Consider Paul’s three-way condemnation of self-righteousness (Romans 12:16).
- F. True wisdom understands the necessity of being a fool to be wise (I Cor 3:18-19).
- G. Self-righteousness is one of the most horrible and dangerous sins from hell.
  - 1. It is impossible to reason with it, for it cannot receive instruction (Pr 26:20).
  - 2. It is difficult to see it in yourself, for you are too “righteous” to see it (Gal 6:3).
  - 3. It is confidence you are quite good, competent, intelligent, and capable.
  - 4. It is difficulty in saying you are wrong, foolish, stupid, proud, and rebellious.
  - 5. It is enjoying finding or discussing the faults or weaknesses of others.
  - 6. It is presuming to accuse others, when you have your own set of sins.
  - 7. It is always having an opinion about the conduct of others without Scripture.
  - 8. It is the defensiveness and testiness of resisting and balking at correction.
  - 9. It is the presumption of making judgments and opinions against authority.
  - 10. It is the ease with which you can apply a sermon to most anyone else.
  - 11. It is the thought during a sermon that you don’t really need change here.
  - 12. It is the response that you are comfortable with things as they are.
  - 13. It is the defensiveness when you are corrected rather than thankfulness.
  - 14. It is crying defensively when you are criticized or warned about sin.
  - 15. It is running to an extreme of declaring failure when you are criticized.
  - 16. It is the excuse that I am not really that bad – you just misunderstand me.
  - 17. It is the memory of the sins of others when you are being corrected.
  - 18. It is the scorning response of mentioning the sins of the one correcting you.
- H. Do you love correction? Do you love those who correct you? Read Proverbs 9:7-10.

- I. This point is key! How do you take criticism? Warmly with affection? Or resistance?
- J. Virtuous persons are most likely to criticize themselves as self-righteous sinners, even though they are not. And hypocrites are least likely to do so, even though they are!

### III. WE MUST BE POOR

- A. Solomon taught that humility and the fear of the Lord is true success (Proverbs 22:4).
- B. Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of which we may be chief (I Timothy 1:15).
- C. Jesus taught an internal religion of the spirit to replace external ritual (John 4:21-24).
  - 1. Read the Sermon on the Mount and its blessings on holy hearts (Matt 5:1-12).
  - 2. Blessed are the poor in SPIRIT – no thoughts of spiritual success or riches here.
  - 3. Blessed are they that mourn – no excuse or justification or comfort for sins here.
  - 4. Blessed are the meek – no thoughts of importance or rank or value by these.
  - 5. Blessed are the hungry – no thought of spiritual attainment or complacency here.
  - 6. Blessed are the merciful – no thoughts of judgment or criticism of others here.
  - 7. Blessed are the pure in heart – no thoughts of superiority or hypocrisy in these.
  - 8. Blessed are the peacemakers – no thoughts of despising or neglecting here.
  - 9. Blessed are the persecuted – no thoughts of public opinion measures here.
- D. God resisteth the proud; but He giveth grace to the humble (I Peter 5:5-6).
- E. Consider our Lord's righteously harsh criticism of Laodicea (Revelation 3:17-18).
- F. We deceive ourselves when we think ourselves to be something (Galatians 6:3).
- G. Don't lie to yourself that you know much, for we nothing as we ought to (I Cor 8:2).
- H. The Lord is high, but He hath respect unto the lowly and hates the proud (Ps 138:6).
- I. When Peter met the Lord, he asked him to depart for his wickedness (Luke 5:8).
- J. When Isaiah met the Lord, he cried out for the woe of his unclean tongue (Isaiah 6:1-8).
- K. We must come with the spirit of the psalmist in complete humility (Psalm 131:1).
- L. Paul thought himself less than the least of all saints (Ephesians 3:8).

### IV. WE MUST HAVE A CONTRITE SPIRIT

- A. **Contrite.** 2. *fig.* Crushed or broken in spirit by a sense of sin, and so brought to complete penitence.
- B. Jesus condemned Simon the Pharisee for lack of contrition for sins (Luke 7:36-50).
- C. God sent His blessings through Jesus Christ for the brokenhearted (Is 57:15; 61:1-3).
- D. Sacrifice to God is a broken and contrite heart; other hearts God despises (Ps 51:17).
- E. The Lord is nigh unto all them that be of a broken heart and contrite spirit (Ps 34:18).
- F. Remember the fully penitent attitude of Ephraim and God's blessings (Jer 31:18-20).
- G. There is no loss in being a sinner in your mind, for Jesus came for them (Mark 2:15-17).

### V. WE MUST TREMBLE AT HIS WORD

- A. A constant state of fear toward God and His Word will save from trouble (Prov 28:14).
- B. Consider just a few examples of a righteous response to God and His Word.
  - 1. When Paul met the Lord, he said, "What wilt thou have me to do?"
  - 2. When the jailor met the Lord, he said, "What must I do to be saved?"
  - 3. When Cornelius met Peter, he said, "We want to hear all things from God."
- C. The Psalmist trembled for fear of God and His judgments (Psalm 119:120, 161).