

Equipping The Saints

“...For the equipping of the saints for the work of service...” ~ Ephesians 4:12

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1.29

Our Attitude Toward The Lost (By Rick Ligin)

What is your attitude toward the lost, those separated from God because of their sin? As Christians, we are in hot pursuit of righteousness (2 Timothy 2:22); we **“abhor what is evil”** and **“cling to what is good”** (Romans 12:9). Our attitude toward sin is that we **“hate every false way,”** no matter what form it takes (Psalm 119:104). And to be quite honest, this approach to sin—which, frankly, is the right approach—sometimes affects the way we feel about those engrossed in sin. We get to where we not only despise the sin, but we also despise the sinner.

This clearly was the attitude of the self-righteous Jew in Jesus’ day. The Pharisees were particularly bad about trusting **“in themselves that they were righteous,”** while they **“despised others”** (Luke 18:9). You can almost hear the contempt in their voices as they referred to certain **“types”** as **“tax-gatherers and sinners”** (Luke 15:1-2; cf. 7:39).

Is that the way we see sinners? Oh, we may not be self-righteous like the hypocritical Pharisees, but do we sometimes look down our noses at those who are drowning in sin? Hopefully not! But what should our attitude be toward the lost?

As with almost everything for the Christian, the answer lies in the example of our Lord...

I am so amazed at the attitude Jesus manifested toward those who were lost. On at least two different occasions, Jesus looked out over a multitude of lost people and yet He did not see them as rebellious, vile sinners, deserving of eternal damnation. That certainly may have been what they really were, but that definitely is not the way Jesus saw them! Instead, the text says that, **“He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd”** (Matthew 9:36; cf. Mark 6:34). He saw them, not as despicable sinners who were getting their *“just deserts,”* but as people weighed down with the heavy burden of sin; as folks who were beat up and scared; as frightened sheep without direction, lost, hopelessly lost.

Now that’s the way you and I ought to see sinners! We ought to feel compassion for them and be sympathetic toward their condition because, after all, we too are sinners! Forgiven, yes, but sinners, none-the-less. And that compassion ought to move us to respond to them in exactly the same way Jesus did. He didn’t back away from them in disgust or turn from them apathetically. Instead, **“He began to teach them many things”** (Mark 6:34).

Man, how impressive is that! No scolding! No saying, *“I told you so!”* No beating them down further when they were already as low as it gets. Just giving them what they needed to lift them up out of their distress and out of their lost and undone condition. Folks, when you and I begin to see sinners the way Jesus did, maybe then we too will begin to teach. Maybe then, we too will hunger for lost souls and make diligent efforts to spread the message of salvation.

It is for this very reason that you and I need to adopt the same attitude that Jesus had toward sinners—not just because it’s

the right way to think—but also because it is the attitude that will help motivate us to greater evangelistic efforts (Matthew 28:18-20). And after all, isn't that why Jesus came to earth in the first place —“**to seek and to save that which was lost**” (cf. Luke 19:10)? You know it is! And thank God He did, for without that attitude, without His kind compassion and loving care we would *all* still be lost, hopelessly lost!

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9 Ways To Be Evangelistic Without Being The Teacher

(By Berry Kercheville)

3. Can You Be a Co-Learner? Jesus said, “**Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.**” The Hebrew writer rebuked the Jewish Christians with the words, “**For by this time you ought to be teachers...**” Most Christians have never taught or even been in a position to observe a non-Christian being taught. The easiest way to learn to share the gospel is to observe an experienced teacher. When I look back to my youth and compare it to our present generation, I am surprised that at age 23 I knew how to develop a series of lessons to share with an unbeliever. The reason I was prepared resulted from the equipping done by our local preacher, watching my parents share the gospel, and sitting in on home Bible studies with neighbors. Christians today have typically not observed personal studies nor been taught how to effectively discuss the scriptures with a friend. There is a great need for members who will watch, learn, and take part in spreading the gospel. Jesus prayed for it.

Even more troubling is the end result of this lack of participation. Christians who are never involved in bringing an unbeliever to know the Lord, lose the ability to be compassionate for the lost. This has even happened to preachers who are not evangelistic. They can be quite comfortable showing the foolishness of error from the pulpit, but because they have not spent weeks and months around the kitchen table patiently teaching a friend, it becomes difficult to relate to a person who grew up in the clutches of the devil (2 Timothy 2:24-26). It is the difference between reading about war and actually being on the front lines. Even if a Christian never became the primary teacher, every disciple of Christ would benefit from watching and learning.

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Notes:

AM Lesson:

*Walking In Unity
(Ephesians 4:1-6)*

PM Lesson:

Will We Be Victorious?

"Go therefore and make disciples..." (Matthew 28:19-20)