

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” -Psalm 119:105

January 2, 2005

The Balanced Christian

Joe R. Price

Jesus said, *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone”* (**Matt. 23:23**). The Pharisees had neglected (lit. “leave, send away”) the elements of character and conduct which validate one’s service to God and others. Their enthusiasm for correctness was not rebuked by Jesus. It was their failure to ground their zeal in the fundamental traits commanded in the law – justice, mercy, and faith – that brought Jesus’ rebuke.

These attributes must define our heart and conduct before men and God. The law commanded the very elements they neglected: justice (**Exo. 23:2, 6; Micah 6:8**); mercy (**Lev. 19:10**) and faith (**Deut. 10:12-13**). But, because of their spiritual blindness, their lives were out of balance. Consequently, the failure of the scribes and Pharisees to have these qualities caused them to disobey God’s word by binding man-made traditions as doctrine (**Matt. 15:3, 6-9**).

Like the scribes and Pharisees, it is also possible for us to be out of balance. The balanced Christian is mature in his responsibilities toward

God and men. Justice, mercy, and faith in one's life shows a measure of maturity. To "*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord*" means much more than just knowing things about Jesus (**2 Pet. 3:18**). A person may grow in "knowing" the Bible, but he is still immature if his knowledge does not move him to live with justice, mercy, and faith.

The balanced Christian serves others. He is fair and equitable in all his dealings with others. He is merciful to those who need compassion, because he has come to realize his own need for mercy (**Matt. 18:32-35; 5:7; Jas. 2:13**). His judgments are fair, not a facade for evil (**Jno. 7:24**). He helps those who are in need, not because he is forced to, but because of justice, mercy, and faith. His character is reflected in all of his relationships (family, the local church, on the job, the community, etc.) because this is who he is and what he is about; he lives for others and not himself.

The balanced Christian lives by faith (**2 Cor. 5:7**). He listens to, believes, and obeys the New Testament of Jesus Christ. His will is to do the will of the Father (**Matt. 7:21**). Therefore, he does not compromise truth or accommodate error (**Gal. 2:5, 11-14**). He will not be a blind guide, straining out gnats and swallowing camels. He will trust the Lord's word and be directed by it, and not lean on his own understanding (**Prov. 3:5-6**).

"These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone." Now, that's the balance Jesus approves.

"You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." – **Psalm 73:24**

“If Only...”

Frank Himmel

If only my boss wouldn't be so rude and domineering, I would be more cooperative at work. *“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable”* (1 Pet. 2:18).

If only my husband weren't so lazy and self-centered, if only he would learn to control his temper better, I would live with him. *“. . . wives, be submissive to your husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior”* (1 Pet. 3:1-2).

If only the brethren were friendlier and that preacher not so dry, I would go to church more often. *“. . . let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another...”* (Heb. 10:24-25).

If only I had more income and less bills, I would give a lot more. *“...in the churches of Macedonia...in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality”* (2 Cor. 8:1-2).

If only my family would be more supportive, I would become a Christian. *“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me...”* (Mt. 10:37).

Do you notice that what God expects of us, He expects regardless of our particular circumstances? Instead of excusing ourselves due to adverse

conditions, let us commit ourselves to our Creator and Benefactor. If only *we would be like Jesus, who said, "...I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me"* (**John 5:30**). He not only said it, He lived it - even to the point of death.

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"This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it"
(Psalm 118:24).