

January 20, 2011

Becoming Like Jesus Is Biblical “Common Sense”

A word of encouragement:

During the time demonic strongholds and toxic memories ruled your mind in conjunction with your sin nature, they kept you deceived. You were unable to perceive what you were really like from God's vantage point. But now that you're seeking His way of restoring relationships, you need to intentionally pursue His biblical pattern.

In the process of replacing fear-based (toxic) memories with love-based (healthy) ones, you must *first* be willing to appreciate just how really evil you were (Genesis 6:5, Ephesians 2:3). Don't let deceit keep you from remembering the sins you committed against God and against others. If you've repented, you're forgiven. But there are still consequences to others for what you did. *Second*, you must be willing to take FULL responsibility for the emotional hurt you inflicted on others by your sinful words and/or actions. The wrong you did to them was indeed terrible. But even more important, you need to feel within yourself how grievously you hurt their hearts, and take responsibility for that pain. Only in this manner can they replace the past painful experiences at your hands with HOPE. Hope brings them emotional peace that can recognize that you've changed and are living by love-grounded motives in Jesus.

Too many in contemporary Christendom have been seduced into the anti-Christ view that people are "basically good" rather than inherently evil as Scripture proclaims. The "basically good" view is anti-Christ because, if people are good at heart, then it makes absolutely irrelevant Jesus' death, which paid the penalty for their sins. In other words, He died for nothing because people "weren't all that bad." Satan's # 1 weapon, the stronghold of deceit, has prevented multitudes from seeing themselves as our Lord sees them: sinners absolutely separated from a holy God by their sin. This self-deception also hinders them from fully appreciating the evil they've done that has hurt others. They may apologize for WHAT they did wrong. But, they won't let themselves feel the emotional hurt they've caused others by their words or deeds or attitudes.

Please, talk about this with those who truly care about you. Do they see you fully taking responsibility for the hurt you've caused, or only apologizing for what you did wrong?

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Shortly after Sue and I returned from Israel in 1994, we received a letter from a woman we'd known from our retreat center ministry days during 1983-93. She wrote that while she was at work one day at her new ministry, she kept hearing the Holy Spirit saying, "Mike Dowgiewicz is Thomas Paine." She didn't even know who Thomas Paine was, so she went to the library and sent us a brief history of the man. As I read it I sobbed.

Thomas Paine wrote about politics and religion during the 18th century, and his writings greatly influenced the leaders of the Revolutionary War. His pamphlet, *Common Sense*, did much to help clarify the issues of the Revolution and the cost of freedom. "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the summer patriot will, in this, shrink from the service of his country. . . Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered." Washington ordered the pamphlet to be read aloud to his soldiers. Paine's bold, clear words encouraged the Continental Army during the darkest days of the war.

We hope that our writings encourage you to be as pure as you can in your loving obedience to Jesus. In order to throw off the tyranny of pursuing worldly goals and the complacent trappings of Hellenist-based religion, we each must embrace the fiery cost of permitting our Father to transform us into the character of His Son, Jesus. Many of you are paying the cost of walking by faith in Christ. You have been rejected by those who love this world and/or hide out in religion. Cling to your Lord through His Spirit in you! Don't let yourself dwell in despair or self-pity. As the darkness is descending on this nation, we have only a short time to prepare ourselves to be His light in that darkness.

As you read Lifebyte 74, take the time to reflect on and discuss with others how you mutually cooperate in extending the Kingdom of God as His loving ambassadors.

- Do you see yourselves from our Father's larger picture—the salvation of all mankind?
- Do you fully appreciate the input each of you provides?
- Are you compelled by the love of Jesus in you to serve others as His heart and hands?
- Are the gifts of the Spirit and His *rhema* readily relied on in your endeavors?

When darkness surrounds you, each of these qualities will be sorely needed.

Our heart's desire is to spur you on toward love and good deeds.

Mike & Sue