

Ep 1-14 - Steps to a Godly Maturity

I. In our last message, we spoke of the possibility and privilege we have today for bearing fruit out of season. Now, we will talk about three attitudes we need to have to bear the fruit that God desires, and steps we must take to achieve a Godly maturity.

II. Step 1. Our walk with God is not a religion. It's a relationship.

A. Some bad examples of viewing it as a religion.

- a. Saul and Samuel. I Samuel 15. Saul thought that obeying part of God's command was good enough if he was religious.
- b. David and Bathsheba. II Samuel 11:4. David committed adultery with Bathsheba after she was cleansed from uncleanness!
- c. The Israelites. Malachi 1:6-9. They brought defiled sacrifices to God.

B. We are in a relationship with God!

- a. Jesus Christ gave the rule for today. John 4:19-24. God wants us to worship Him in spirit and truth.
- b. Paul gives the example for today. Philippians 3:4-8. Paul viewed the religious advantages that he had as dung compared to gaining knowledge of Christ.

III. Step 2. It's not all about you. It's all about God.

A. Do we view God like an employee at Wal-Mart?

1. When we go to a store, we expect to be waited on, not to serve. When we come to God, do we expect the same thing?
2. Many carry the "customer is always right" mindset into their relationship with God. Do you?

B. God is in charge.

1. Remember: God is what really matters. I Corinthians 3:5-7. Paul speaks of the work he and Apollos did, but says it was nothing compared to what God did.
2. God's satisfaction is more important. He must be satisfied, not us.
 - a. We can grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Ephesians 4:30.
 - b. We can also please Him, and this should be our concern. II Timothy 2:4.
 - c. Do you ever think about God's feelings? Do you ever consider that your actions may grieve or please Him? Do you care? If you love Him, shouldn't you?

IV. Step 3. We don't criticize the Bible. It criticizes us.

A. When you read a book or magazine, you are acting as a critic in your head.

1. You can agree or disagree with what you read.
2. You can like or dislike what you read. You can enjoy it or not.

B. When we read the Bible, we need a different attitude. We must be ready to be criticized by It!

1. The Word is powerful, and can criticize. Hebrews 4:12.
2. The Word sees through our bias. It sees our hearts for the way they really are. Proverbs 21:2.

C. Can you take God's criticism?

1. The Canaanite woman. Matthew 15:21-28.
 1. This woman accepted the Lord's assessment of her, even when He called her a dog.

2. Could you accept a similar assessment from God, or do you only like to hear positive things? Could you take being called a dog if God did it?
2. I heard a man say that he didn't like Mark 10! We might never say this, but do we ever think it? When we "critique" God's statements, isn't that the same as saying we are smarter than He is, at least sometimes?
3. What would you do if your beliefs were criticized by God's Word? Can you honestly take His criticism?

V. We serve a powerful God. Yet often we act like He is our serving boy. To bear the fruit that God desires, we need to take the place that He requires. We need to live in relationship with Him. We must make Him the important One in the relationship. And we must learn to take His criticism, not expect Him to take ours. Only then will we be spiritually mature believers, and able to bear fruit for Him. These are the attitudes that lead to true maturity!