

Dancing With The Devil's World

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I was listening to Richard's commentary last week ["Leaving Religion Behind"], and two things came to mind regarding the Millennials and the difference between Jesus and them, and perhaps also some of us in that regard, but I hope not.

What came to mind while he was speaking was Hebrews 1:9:

Hebrews 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

That verse provides us with God's evaluation of the absolute level of Jesus Christ's morality. It states very simply, "You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness." Well, that is what Jesus showed the Father in the conduct of His submission to the Father. He thus showed the Father where His heart was, regardless of what the occasion was, regardless of the time of Jesus' life, and regardless of what everyone else was doing. He set the height of the morality bar as high as it can possibly be raised by that approach. He set it in the place where it has to be set in: in His heart, because the word of God says that sin is generated in the heart.

Isn't it interesting that God used terms that we normally consider emotional qualities—feelings, as we might say—to describe Jesus' attitude towards sin and righteousness? Two opposites: love and hate.

I thought of this in relation to the poll that showed that many Millennials judge Christianity as being the cause of many of the problems, when in reality, their failures fall into two areas of their own judgment. The first is to not truly make efforts to seek truth. That is, truth regarding a way of life. The second is in choosing to follow the wrong models.

I realize that I am looking at this and evaluating a very complex situation that even allows us to be able to cast some blame toward God Himself because He has permitted the world we have all been born into as blank and empty vessels, waiting to be drawn into the picture as we live our lives, choosing to do this or do that.

But I want us to remember, along with Hebrews 1:9, Hebrews 2:9-10:

Hebrews 2:9-10 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

He never sinned, but He suffered. Now consider what I'm about to say in the light of Hebrews 2:9-10. The Jesus with that clear evaluation in Hebrews 1:9 was born into the same world and had the same basic pressures facing Him as we do. Which way shall I go? This way or that? He succeeded admirably, reaching right conclusions and following the right examples in the activities of life.

As I said in the sermon that I gave it the Feast ["Deuteronomy and Holiness"], I know that in having to care for Evelyn in her present state of health, that by comparison, I have failed miserably. I mean, in comparison with Christ, and that to my shame, I'm incredibly self centered.

I'm not holding the Millennials in contempt. I am, though, pointing out where just one of the real charges of the Millennials' attitude lies. I do not believe that I am exaggerating when I say that I believe that perhaps the major attitude problem is that what they yearn for is to be like everybody else in order to be accepted.

I realize that my evaluation is very broad, but I also want you to accept a reality that you know is true: that human nature hasn't changed one iota since Adam and Eve. Being accepted plays a major role in influencing a young person's behavior.

Jesus was young once, too. He had to live with the human nature, effectively applied, right in His home, day after day, because it was clearly displayed by His brothers. And yet He did not sin. He did not do things that they did in order to be accepted by them. Jesus' behavior was entirely different from His own peers', right in His own home. It was not until after His resurrection that *He* was accepted by *them*. It was *they* who had to change their behavior and attitudes, but it was not something He, even as God in the flesh, forced them to do.

This is why I pointed out two major problems that Millennials and every young person faces. And in confronting them, God makes everyone choose. The first is that, in their immaturity, they do not really seek truth. Second, they choose, almost always of their own volition, who will be the role models they follow. Those are two powerful forces.

The Millennial generation has reached the age now when the lights are beginning to go on in their minds regarding their lives' accomplishments at this time and the results of them, and it's no wonder they are skeptical of this world's Christianity. This is because this world's Christianity isn't Christianity! God has allowed this and He will not stop it. It has to be dealt with, but they think it is real Christianity. Like all of us, they have been sold a bill of goods by the around and the about by the culture that they were born into. That is the very crowd they choose their role models from. It is very clear that Jesus did not choose His role models from the around and the about.

In Luke 2:41-52, it is made very clear. He was 12 when this occurred. The family had traveled from Nazareth to Jerusalem to observe Passover. Following its conclusion, the family started traveling toward home, but Jesus disappeared from the group. It took the group three days of searching high and low to locate Him, and they found Him at the temple discussing biblical topics, both asking and answering questions. His mother was distraught and castigated Him to some degree. Jesus responded respectfully by asking, "Did you not know I must be about My Father's business?" That tells you something. Jesus' role model was from within His own *spiritual* family.

I want you to think again about God's evaluation of Jesus. He secured God's acceptance and approval because He loved righteousness and hated sin. One thing I think is very clear: He did not fear being a loner! Why? Because He gradually learned He loved and believed the things His role model Father taught. It's that simple. This was even in the face of the reality that He was very different from everybody else, and His being accepted by everybody was not really what mattered to him. What really mattered was what His role model found pleasing. Therefore, He was not into conforming to the around and the about.

Now, there is a lesson here that both profane history and Jesus Himself makes clear: A Christian must, before baptism, accept the possibility of becoming a loner, frozen out from the companionship of even one's own family, the closest of all people in the around and the about, and even from where his role models originally came.