

Cleansing Ourselves Before Approaching God?

Because of our sin nature, God is inaccessible for us when we have not repented. We are born alienated from God by the law of sin, which is responsible for our human weakness (see Romans 7:14 thru 8:2). Many Christians believe that we are supposed to cleanse ourselves of sin before going to God. The problem with this is that we need God in order to be cleansed and avoid sin actions. Without His grace, we don't have the strength to do it ourselves. Only Christ can provide this strength when He is already within us by His Spirit because the grace for cleansing from the Father flows into us only through Christ. The Spirit provides the strength and the peace to do the will of God, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13). The fruit of the Spirit gives us the necessary qualities of inner peace and strength for keeping us sanctified (see Galatians 5:22-23). This happens when we yield to the Spirit. Without God, our own willpower is insufficient for the task.

Our faith in Christ brings us His presence; then, as we remain anxious for nothing, the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keeps our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (see Philippians 4:6-7). Psalms 55:22 says: "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Our thoughts and emotions come and go, but God's peace and strength reside in our hearts and are not subject to the fluctuations within our minds. This enables us to remain cleansed and strong.

The place of peace which comes from unconditional trust in God is also the place where we receive guidance from God. Colossians 3:15 says: "And let the peace of God rule [be the umpire] in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one

body; and be ye thankful." Proverbs 3:5-6 says "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths", "For it is God who worketh [] in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). When we trust in God and don't lean on our own understanding, God gives us His direction. We are "led forth with peace" (Isaiah 55:12).

God responds to us when we are humble towards Him by casting all of our care on Him, which is what we need to do in order to receive grace and the other things of God (see 1Peter 5:5-7 and James 4:4-10). Our care includes all of our excessive attachment to the things of the world. 2Peter1:4 speaks of "having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." God makes this escape possible. Our lust is what keeps us attached to the things of the world. The things of the world do not, in themselves, attach themselves to us. Our tendency towards lust comes from the law of sin within us; but we don't need to remain in this weakness that we were born with. We do not even apply lust to God. Instead, He wants us to rest upon Him and surrender the whole process of lust to Him.

When we get our contentment from God, we will not seek it in other things. If we look to other things, we will never find contentment because there will never be enough to satisfy us. When we don't lean on our own understanding, we also reject leaning on the thoughts that make us believe that we are going to find contentment and peace by adding things to our lives. We will never gather enough of them to make us content; but the deceptiveness of lust tells us that they will make us content. We need to subordinate our entire mind to God which also includes our worries, anger, unforgiveness, compulsions, and addictions. We then receive the strength to live holy sanctified lives.

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Email comments to aiello235@.