

Spiritual Blindness: Cause And Cure

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I. Introduction

- A. Rom. 10:1–4—Israel’s greatest need was, and is yet today, not to inherit the land or defeat the Arabs, but to be saved. Because they are ignorant of God’s righteousness, they go about to establish their own righteousness, which is self-righteousness, and leads to spiritual blindness.
- B. Rom. 10:4—Christ is the end of the law to all who believe, not as part of the Word of God, or Israel’s history or culture, but as a means to achieve righteousness with God.
- C. Is. 64:6—All our righteousnesses (not sin) are as filthy rags.

II. Features Of Self-Righteousness

- A. Luke 18:9–14—There are five features which characterize self-righteousness:
 - 1. Self-centered
 - 2. Despises others
 - 3. Compares oneself with others
 - 4. Consists in observing a list of rules, primarily negative
 - 5. Static, and makes no room for change
- B. “Legalism” makes the law an end in itself and loses sight of the real purpose for which the law was given, which is that we are to love God and our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:35–40; 1 Tim. 1:5–6). A clear example of legalism is the way in which the Pharisees demanded observance of the Sabbath.
- C. Ex. 23:12—God gave the Sabbath as a blessing to man that he might receive rest and refreshing.
- D. Matt. 23:16, 17, 19, 24, 26—Jesus emphasizes the direct result of self-righteousness: spiritual blindness (compare Rom. 11:25)
- E. Luke 13:11–17—By their legalism, the Pharisees actually reversed the purpose of the Sabbath, making it a reason to keep man under his burdens, rather than an occasion for releasing him from his burdens. Jesus took special pleasure in healing on the Sabbath.

III. How God’s Righteousness Works

- A. In contrast to the five features which characterize self-righteousness, God’s righteousness is:
 - 1. Christ-centered. We must believe we are accepted in the Beloved (Christ) because of who He is and what he has done (Eph. 1:6).
 - 2. As a result of our own acceptance we will accept and not despise others (Rom. 14:3, 7).
 - 3. God has only one standard and one goal for righteousness—Jesus Christ. We are not to compare ourselves with others (2 Cor. 10:12, Acts 17:31; Phil. 3:7–14).
 - 4. When we believe we are accepted of God, God works in us and we work out what God has worked in. God works in two things:
 - a. To will and
 - b. To do His good pleasureAs Christians we should not always be doing that which is right, against our

own will.

5. God's righteousness is progressive, not static. We grow up as accepted children desiring to do the Father's will (Eph. 4:15; 2 Cor. 3:18).
- B.** Prov. 4:18—If we are walking in the pathway of the righteous, the light will be getting brighter every day.

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